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Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani[as]

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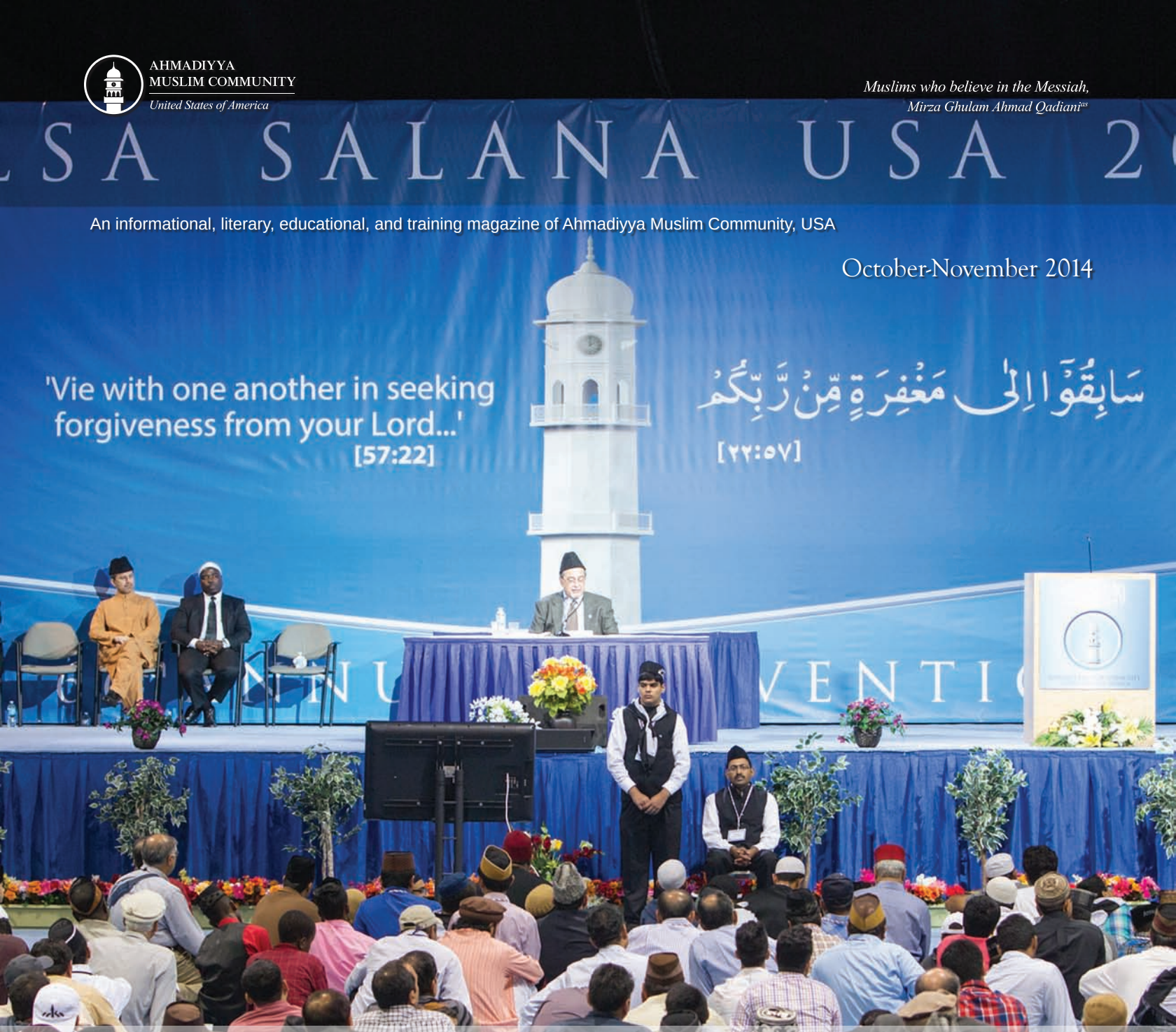

The Ahmadiyya GAZETTE

Jalsa Salana USA Edition

USA

Invocations of
THE HOLY PROPHET OF ISLĀM
Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā
Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ـ

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allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā muḥammadiñwwa ‘alā āli muḥammadin kamā ṣallaita ‘alā ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli ibrāhīma innaka ḥamīddummajīd

allāhumma bārik ‘alā muḥammadiñwwa alā āli muḥammadin kamā bārakta ‘alā ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli ibrāhīma innaka ḥamīddummajīd

Bless O Allāh, Muḥammad and the people of Muḥammad as You did bless Abraham and the people of Abraham. You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

Prosper O Allāh, Muḥammad and the people of Muḥammad as You did prosper Abraham and the people of Abraham. You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

(Bukhārī Kitābul Anbiyā')

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DR. KARIMULLAH ZIRVI

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Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā
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Dr. Karimullah Zirvi

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Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu/'anha (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah support him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhanahu wa ta'ala (Glorified is He and exalted)

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Al-Qur'an

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗۤ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرٰىهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَّبْتَغُوْنَ
فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا ۫ سِيْمَاهُمْ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ مِّنْ اَثَرِ السُّجُوْدِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ ۚۛ وَ
مَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۚۛ كَزَرْعٍ اَخْرَجَ شَطْـَٔهٗ فَاٰزَرَهٗ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوٰى عَلٰى سُوْقِهٖ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ
لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ؕ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿۲۹﴾

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are firm against the non-believers, tender among themselves. You see them bowing *and* prostrating themselves *in Prayer*, seeking grace from Allah and *His* pleasure. Their mark is upon their faces, being the traces of prostration. This is their description in Torah. And their description in the Gospel is like unto a seed-produce that sends forth its sprout, then makes it strong: it then becomes thick, and stand firm on its stem, delighting the sowers —that He may cause the disbelievers to burn with rage *at the sight* of them, Allah has promised, unto those of them who believe and do good works, forgiveness and a great reward. (48:30)

COMMENTARY: *(Translation and Short Commentary: Edited by by Malik Ghulam Farid)*

These are the two essential characteristics of a progressive and prosperous people who seek to leave their mark on the course of world events. Elsewhere in the Qur'an (5:55), the true and good Muslims have been described as kind and humble towards believers and hard and firm against disbelievers.

The words, 'This is their description in the Torah,' may refer to the biblical description. *Viz*, 'he shined forth from mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints' (Deut. 33:2). *And the expression, And their description in the Gospel is like unto a seed-produce*, may refer to another biblical parable, *viz.,* Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed seeds; (Math. 13:3-8). The former description seems to apply to the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the latter parable to the followers of Jesus's counterpart, the Promised Messiah, who, from a very small and insignificant beginning, are destined to develop into a mighty organization and gradually but progressively to carry the Message of Islam to the ends of the earth till it will prevail and triumph over all religions, and its opponents will wonder at, and be jealous of, its power and prestige.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ اَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ قَالَ فُضِّلْتُ عَلَى الْاَنْبِيَآءِ بِسِتٍّ اُعْطِيْتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ وَ نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ وَ اُحِلَّتْ لِيَ الْغَنَائِمُ وَ جُعِلَتْ لِيَ الْاَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَ طَهُوْرًا وَ اُرْسِلْتُ اِلَى الْخَلْقِ كَافَّةً وَّ خُتِمَ بِيَ النَّبِيُّوْنَ<١> ۔

Ḥadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "I have been given superiority over other Prophets in six matters. I have been bestowed a comprehensive message. I have been succored with veneration. Spoils of war have been made lawful for me. The whole earth has been made a mosque and a purified place for me. I have been sent as a Messenger for the entire creation, and all the Messengers have been completed and perfected with me."

(Muslim kitabul masajid)

Note:<١>

قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ اِنِّيْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ فِيْ اُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَخَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّيْنَ وَ اِنَّ آدَمَ لَمُنْجَدِلٌ فِيْ طِيْنِهٖ ۔

The Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Surely, according to Allah I am the *Khatamun Nabiyyin* (The Last Law-Bearing Prophet) in the Mother Book while Adam was yet being created."

(Musnad Ahmad)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Personal Experience with God

The God Who has manifested Himself to all the Prophets, and appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and appeared to Jesus on Mount Seir and shone forth to Hadhrat Muhammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) on Mount Paran, the same Mighty and Holy God has manifested Himself to me. He has talked to me and has said: I am the High Being to establish Whose worship all the Prophets were sent. I alone am the Creator and the Master and have no associate. I am not subject to birth or death.

[Zameemah Risalah Jehad, Roohani Khazain, vol. 17 p. 29]

The pure life that is free from sin is a brilliant ruby which no one possesses today. God Almighty has bestowed that brilliant ruby on me and He has commissioned me that I should inform the world of the way in which that brilliant ruby might be acquired. I affirm with confidence that by treading on this path everyone would certainly acquire it. The only way in which it might be acquired is the true recognition of God; but this is a difficult and delicate matter. A philosopher, as I have said already, contemplating the heavens and earth and reflecting on the perfect orderliness of the universe, merely states that there ought to be a Creator. But I lead to a higher stage and affirm on the basis of my personal experience that God is.

[Malfoozat, Vol. III, p. 16]

Our paradise lies in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft! run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life that will save you. What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news, and by beating what drum shall I make the announcement that this is our God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?

[Kashti Nooh, Roohani Khazain, vol. 19 p. 21-22]

Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], on October 17, 2014 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Translated by: Shermeen Butt

Every man, woman, young and old of the *Jama'at* knows a phrase very well, which is 'I shall give precedence to faith over worldly matters.' This is because the Promised Messiah[as] drew great attention to this. Speeches of our orators cite this phrase as well as addresses of *Khulafa*. Indeed, this phrase is a synopsis of the conditions of *Bai'at* as it is a summary of the pledges of our various auxiliary organizations. And these words are also mentioned in the conditions of *Bai'at*. In short this phrase is a promise an Ahmadi makes on which his *Bai'at* is dependent. As does his connection with *Khilafat* and *Nizame Jama'at* (administration of the *Jama'at*) rely on this phrase. If he does not practice this phrase then his claim to *Bai'at,* connection with *Khilafat* and *Nizam* of *Jama'at* is erroneous. And assertions about Bai'at and attainment of God's pleasure are reduced to mere verbosity!

In this regard the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: 'If someone asserts during *Bai'at* that he will give precedence to faith over worldly matters but does not practice it and does not honor his pledge, then what care has God for him?

Everyone needs to have this phrase in view at all times. As it is clear from the phrase, no worldly matters should impede matters of faith and what is faith? It is spending one's life in accordance with and under the commandments of God and to try and gain His pleasure through each word and deed of ours. With the grace of God a large majority of people among us try and remove any impediments in the way of faith but it is a fact that everyone's efforts are not the same. People have varying capacities in terms of knowledge and other matters. However, God knows what our intentions are therefore He treats each individual in accordance with his capacity. The basis of fulfilling this pledge is good intention and no excuses should be made. Some people have limited capacities even in the worldly sense due to inadequate knowledge or other factors while others make greater and appropriate efforts and focus on attaining their goal and indeed attain it. Today's sermon was based on and in light of an exposition by Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] on this subject.

An everyday example of making inadequate effort as regards one's objective would be when before stepping out some people pay too much attention to and are acutely conscious of their appearance no matter how important the task in hand. They are too pernickety not to have any creases in their clothes and fuss over this even if they do not have enough time to go where they need to be. Their effort to leave promptly is restricted due to their fuss over their clothes. Such examples can be found even today especially among Asian men and women who are too conscious about their clothes and appearance. There are others who like to follow fashion but with some other goal in sight they forgo their stylishness. If they have to run somewhere to achieve their goal they will do so notwithstanding their style and flair. If they have to sit somewhere, they will do so and will even walk in dusty surroundings if that is what it takes. This is because for them the main thing is their goal and for this they do not care about other things. Their elegant clothes or all-white attire do not become a hindrance in attainment of their goal.

Queen Elizabeth I acceded to the throne in 1558 and reigned over England for forty five years. She was a famous queen and it was during her reign that England gained power and prominence. The Queen was known to like to have well-dressed and elegant courtiers around her and anyone who was not well-dressed was not allowed in her court. Indeed, she was surrounded by foppish and dapper young courtiers. Once she was going somewhere on foot with her courtiers when they reached a muddy spot. One of her young courtiers, Sir Walter Raleigh lay took off his valuable cloak and lay it down on the muddy spot. The Queen was astonished and asked why he did that. Sir Walter Raleigh replied that it was better to spoil his cloak than the Queen to get her feet dirty. From this time he was shown favor at court and was granted generous monopolies. Later, during the reign of King James I he was charged with treason and later executed although he had made many expeditions to North America during the reign of King James I.

The moral of this story is that in spite of been a dapper and stylish person Walter Raleigh forfeited his style for the Queen. If a worldly person can sacrifice his valuable cloak and give up his flair as he did we should think how much we need to do for the advancement and propagation of Islam and to strengthen and maintain it and to attain the pleasure of our Creator! Is our objective not even as dear to us as the Queen's pleasure was to Walter Raleigh? In spite of his service his ending was painful. But when one seeks God's pleasure one becomes the recipient of Divine blessings and also has an excellent ending. We should always remember that it is not enough to simply have high objectives but one also has to serve and makes sacrifices. God's pleasure can be attained when one truly gives precedence to faith over worldly matters.

God has not forbidden us to earn a living in the world and whatever is not forbidden is warrantable. It is indeed warrantable to wear elegant, valuable clothes, eat fine foods and live in splendid houses and have high grade ornaments. However, all this would be unwarrantable if it became a hindrance in the advancement of Islam. *Shariah* does not require you to look for an unattractive woman to marry. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said that while looking for a prospective wife one should not only look for worldly qualities but should also look how religious the woman is. *Shariah* says that a wife should not become a hindrance in the worship of the husband. If our young men and women and their parents are mindful of this, family problems would be resolved by giving precedence to faith over worldly matters and the other objective, which is the objective of a true believer, that is, to attain pleasure of God would also be achieved.

Similarly it is certainly not forbidden to wear fine clothes. However restraint is enjoined not to absorb oneself so much in fashion and trends that one loses sense of religious tasks. Owing to their fineness one's clothes should not become an impediment in service of faith. Rather than pay attention to *Salat* one should not be mindful about not letting one's clothes get creased. Islam teaches not to be negligent about religious work and in this way one can pay the dues of giving precedence to faith over worldly matters. Religion does not stop one from eating fine foods, what is unwarrantable is when fine dining becomes a hindrance in matters of faith. It should always be kept in view that whatever interferes in religious matters should be removed. The Promised Messiah[as] said in this regard:

'Look, there are two types of people; firstly those who accept Islam and then become engrossed in worldly business and trade and Satan overcomes them. I do not mean here that trade is forbidden. Companions were also traders but they gave precedence to faith over worldly matters. When they accepted Islam, they attained true knowledge which filled their hearts with conviction about Islam. This is the reason why they did not falter in any field in face of Satan's attacks. Nothing stopped them from expressing the truth. Those who become slaves of the world are aficionados of the world and Satan overcomes and vanquishes such people. The other type of people are those who are concerned about the advancement of faith. This is the group which is referred to as *Hizb Allah* (party of Allah). They triumph over Satan and his hosts.'

As stated earlier through the first quote of the Promised Messiah[as] the rights of *Bai'at* are fulfilled by giving precedence to faith over worldly matters. To have an insight of this it is important to seek religious

knowledge alongside worldly things and then the knowledge should be put in practice in one's life. Without gaining religious knowledge one cannot know what faith is which needs to be given precedence. *Salat* is a basic article of faith in Islam but about 80% of Muslims do not observe it and if they do offer the odd *Salat* in the day they offer it so hastily. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] said that many prominent people are indolent about offering *Salat* and for aristocratic people offering congregational *Salat* is the same as eating flesh of swine is for ordinary Muslims. This situation persists today. Majority of the well-off become negligent about *Salat* and even if they offer it, their condition is contrary to how the condition of those who offer Salat should be. Those who offer *Salat* are guardians of human values and *Salat* bring pious changes in them.

It is said that the congregations in mosques of non-Ahmadis are increasing. Yet what revolutionary change has their *Salat* brought? The mullahs teach nothing other than hatred and this is the reason that in spite of increased congregations the fire of hatred continues to be flamed. Let alone their persecution against us, they are also perpetrating cruelty amongst themselves. They go to mosques with lowly worldly goals. Indeed for higher ideals one also needs to refine one's thoughts. If the increase in their congregations is not in view of high ideals, like propagating faith and serving humanity, then it is worthless.

All this should draw our own attention, more than ever, to understand the concept of giving precedence to faith over worldly matters. If we pay the dues of mankind along with paying the dues of God and propagate faith then we can enjoy blessings of this world as much as we want! We have to fulfill the responsibility of spreading the beautiful teaching of Islam which has been given to us. Translation of the Holy Qur'an in various languages of the world is our responsibility, we have to fulfill this. We have to build mosques everywhere so that we can facilitate true worshippers and for this planning needs to be done in every country. We have to establish the best ideals of human values and with all this even earning a living becomes an aspect of faith. Otherwise what is warrantable becomes unwarrantable for us in the sight of God.

If we push aside the thought of paying *chanda* when the new iPhone is launched or if some money has come in and we wish to buy a new car or buy a suit, what is otherwise warrantable becomes unwarrantable. If efforts are being made to have a mosque built but we give preference to other things, this is also wrong.

During the Battle of Uhad the rumor started that the Holy Prophet[saw] was martyred. A Companion who had starved for days was eating dry dates as a meal at the time. When he heard the news he threw aside the dates and leapt into the battle field and was martyred. He abandoned all thoughts of starvation because faith was demanding that eating dates at that time was sinful. Something, no matter how good it is, when it interferes with faith, is not warrantable and something else, no matter how luxurious, if it does not interfere with faith, it becomes warrantable. We should try and instill that spirit which makes the condition of our heart seek the pleasure of God.

A Tradition relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] was sitting in the mosque with his Companions when three men walked in. Two of them went straight towards the Prophet and the third turned away. One of the two who stayed saw space near the Prophet and quickly went and sat near him. The second person sat behind other people where he found space and the third person thinking there was no space for him, turned away and left. When the Holy Prophet[saw] finished his discourse he explained that one of the three men sought refuge near God and God granted it to him. The second man was a little abashed and God too treated him with abashment. That is, his taking seat in the assembly caused his sins to be forgiven by God. The third person turned away and God also turned away from him.

On the face of it this is a very ordinary narrative. The third man had assumed that that the sound would not reach him so there was no point in staying there and he left. However, as the actions of the three men were based on what was in their hearts and they were expressions of the conditions of their hearts and God looks at what is in hearts and His reward is in accordance with what is in hearts. Therefore the condition of one's heart

is very significant in terms of Divine rewards and this should always be remembered. God saw the condition of their hearts, who was more developed in matters of faith and who showed indolence. The first two were rewarded according to their actions and the third one remained deprived and caused Divine displeasure.

If a true believer makes sacrifice where needed he is worthy of Divine reward. Sacrifice is always either borne of one's capacity or borne of need. At times *Shariah* only asks for sacrifice borne of need. For example if a traveler comes to a group of people with a genuine need and asks for £100 and some people in the group fulfill his need as much as they can with but there is a shortfall of £10. Just then a well-off person comes by who could easily meet the entire need of the traveler on his own but the need at the time is only for £10 and although he has the capacity to pay much more but if he pays the needed £10 with good intent he will be rewarded for it. This is making sacrifice in accordance with what the need is which the well-off person does and is rewarded by God. If there is an appeal for monetary contribution and people pay 100s and 1000s but a person of limited means can only give a few rupee or pounds which he does, God Who watches what is in hearts blesses this act of his and the man attains his objective. Just as the well-off man had attained his objective by paying what was required at time although it was a small amount according to his capacity, the man of limited means also attained his objective by giving in the way of God according to his means.

Hadith relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said that one dirham triumphed over a hundred thousand dirhams. This was because a man who only had two dirhams gave one dirham but the other whose wealth was in hundreds of thousands only gave a hundred thousand which was lesser according to his means.

It should always be remembered that the real objective is to attain pleasure of God. A true believer should mold the state of his heart for this purpose and his objective should be pleasure of God, therein is his success and prosperity and this is what giving precedence to faith over worldly matter entails.

We have been given the responsibility to do great tasks. We pledge to sacrifice our life, property time and honor. Indeed we should always ponder as to how we should utilize our capacities to give precedence to faith over worldly matters. Today *Ijtema* of *Ansarullah* also starts. They will also have their *Shura*. They should reflect over this, in their *Shura* as well and deliberate as to how much they should develop their standards of giving precedence to faith over worldly matters. In fact being *Ansarullah* they should be deliberating over attaining the standards because at their age *Ansarullah* should be role models.

God is not in need of anything of ours. It is indeed His grace and favor that He has told us that if we give precedence to faith over worldly matters we will attain His pleasure. Otherwise God is not in need of any money. All the resources, silver and gold in the world is created by Him. Had He so willed He could have Himself given wealth to people who serve faith, He could have Himself provided them. But He informed us of our objectives and drew our attention to making sacrifice in order to attain the objectives so that we may gain His pleasure.

Alongside wealth God has also bestowed us with children. He could have set in place other means of bringing up children. However, He told parents to bring up their children and spend on them according to their means to attain high ideals so that they children can grow up to serve faith. It is a great responsibility of Ahmadi parents to do the upbringing of their children in a way that they may serve faith. They should nurture their children in such a way that they have an insight into giving precedence to faith over worldly matters from childhood. By entrusting us with these matters God tests us and also confers on us.

Office-holders of all levels should appreciate that their responsibility to fulfill giving precedence to faith over worldly matters is more than others. They have been made responsible to attain this objective and for this there is a great need that they should enhance their level of sacrifice. An office-holder of every level, from neighborhood to central, having had correct appreciation of their status can try and fulfill his pledge as indeed

he should. God always blesses the sincerity of those who serve faith while feeling its pain and He confers His nearness to them. Office-holders should try their utmost to attain this station. May God enable the office-holder of every level and every Ahmadi to have true insight of giving precedence to faith over worldly matters and to practice upon it!

Sad news of a recent martyrdom in Pakistan was given. Latif Alam Butt Sahib was martyred in Kamra, District Attack on 15 October close to his home. An unknown person called him in the street, as he turned around he was shot in the chest four/five times. Upon hearing the news his son Zeeshan came over and the emergency services also arrived but Latif Alam Sahib was martyred on his way to the hospital.

Ahmadiyyat came in the *Shaheed's* family through his father Khurshid Alam Sahib who took *Bai'at* in 1934. The Shaheed was born in April 1952 and worked as an air force technician. He was retired in 1991 after which he started a business of legal books and was admired by all his customers including non-Ahmadi lawyers. At the time of martyrdom the *Shaheed* was serving as *nazim* publication *Ansarullah* and ran a stationery shop. He had also served the *Jama'at* in other capacities. His home was used as a *Salat* center for a long time. The *Shaheed* was always eager to do *Jama'at* work and had a devoted connection with *Khilafat*. His was regular in offering *Salat* and used to arrive at mosque two hours prior to Friday Prayers.

The *Shaheed* was a very courageous man and had fought off an assailant in 2007 when a man tried to shoot him but the bullet came stuck. He was 62 years old at the time of martyrdom. His *Wasiyyat* was being processed at the time of his martyrdom and Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih graciously approved of it and instructed the relevant office to carry out all proceedings in accordance.

The *Shaheed* always participated in all *Jama'at* programs, never missing any. He leaves behind his widow, one daughter Iram Waseem and four sons; Khurram Butt, Zeeshan Butt, Umer Butt and Ali Butt.

After retirement *Shaheed* consciously stayed in the area and made his home there with the hope that a *Jama'at* would be established there. May God bring the *Shaheed's* good intentions to fruition and may in return of his martyrdom God grants us hundreds of Ahmadis and the *Jama'at* is established in the area. May God elevate the status of the *Shaheed* and grant steadfastness to the bereaved family.

May God keep members of the *Jama'at* safe in Pakistan in every way! The enemy is intensifying in enmity. May God soon bring about peace and tranquility for us!

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Hadhrat Tha'labah Buhrani[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said, "Soon the world will be deprived of knowledge, to the extent that people will be unable to understand it (the matters of guidance and wisdom). They said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! How will we be deprived of knowledge while we have the Book of Allah with us?' We would be teaching it to our children. The Messenger[saw] of Allah said, 'The Torah and Gospel, were with the Jews and Christians but did not avail them anything.' "

(Usud al-Ghaba, p 236, vol. I)

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[saw] of Allah say: "Allah will not take away knowledge suddenly. He will take it away from the people by taking away the real scholars. So, when there will remain no religious scholars, people will take ignorant persons as their leaders; when such ones will be consulted, they will render their opinions without having the knowledge. They themselves will stray away or they will lead others astray."

(Bukhari kitabul 'ilm)

MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY
IN ISLAM

بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم
نحمدہ و نصلی علی رسولہ الکریم
وعلی عبدہ المسیح الموعود
خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ
ھوالناصر

Dear Members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, USA

Assalamo Alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu!

I am very pleased that you are holding your Jalsa Salana on 15th, 16th & 17th August, 2014. It is my prayer may Allah bless your Jalsa with great success and may all the members gain countless blessings from this unique Gathering.

I wish to draw your attention to the sermons which I delivered some months ago regarding the need for self-analysis and reformation and continuous improvement of one's character. It is my desire that the members of our Jama'at strive constantly to reform themselves and achieve the highest standards of *Taqwa* so that they can become the best model for Muslims in the world. It is essential to self-reflect and assess your own every day behaviour and then try to improve your character and actions so that you can come close to achieving the values that the Promised Messiah peace be upon him expected from adherents of his Jama'at. Your words should match your deeds so that you may become the true and noble representatives of Islam.

I mentioned in one of these sermons that when we study our present condition, there is cause for concern as to whether we have achieved the changes in our lives in accordance with the wishes of the Promised Messiah peace be upon him . For example, is each one of us contending with every societal ill by challenging it? Is everyone around us impressed by our morals or are we succumbing to the influence of society and forgetting Islamic teaching and traditions? Is each one of us trying our utmost to reform our lifestyle as the Promised Messiah peace be upon him taught and required of us? Have we established that level of truthfulness where there is not even a hint of falsehood and deception? Do we keep an eye on the Hereafter as regards our worldly dealings? Do we give precedence to faith over worldly matters? Do we observe extreme caution in avoiding every ill and every bad

practice? Do we shun usurping the rights of others? Do we observe five daily Prayers? Do we always engage in prayer and remember Allah with humility? Do we abandon associates and friends whose influence is bad? Do we respect and serve our parents and listen to everything good they say to us? Are we gentle and kind towards our wives and their family? Do we deprive our neighbours of small matters of goodness? Do we forgive those who wrong us? Are our hearts free of all kinds of rancour and malice for others? Is every husband and every wife paying the dues of each other's trusts? Do we keep an eye on our condition in the light of our pledge of Bai'at? Are most of our gatherings and assemblies free from slandering others and from back-biting? Is there discourse about Allah and His Messenger in most of our meetings?

If the answer to these questions is in the negative, then we are distant from the teachings of the Promised Messiah peace be upon him and should be seriously concerned about our daily routine. However, if the answer to the questions is in the affirmative then fortunate are those who are paying heed to the way they conduct themselves and are fulfilling the obligations of their Bai'at.

I also pointed out that the foremost thing that Allah has provided for our guidance is the Holy Qur'an. The teachings of Islam deal with innumerable matters and the directives which the Holy Quran has given to us are manifold. You should not take any teaching of the Holy Qur'an lightly, but commit yourself to observing and following each and every injunction of the Holy Qur'an.

This is why the Promised Messiah peace be upon him has cautioned us in "Our Teachings," and for the benefit of our reformation, as follows:

> *'Do not take a single step in contravention of anything contained in the Holy Book. Verily, I tell you truly that whoever evades even the least of the seven hundred commandments embodied in the Holy Qur'an, he shuts the door of salvation upon himself.'*

This is a matter of great fear and concern for us. We need to take every care, therefore, before taking even a single step or undertaking the smallest action.

The Promised Messiah peace be upon him continues:

> *'The real and perfect paths of salvation have been opened only by the Holy Qur'an; all others were only its shadows. Therefore you should study this Holy Scripture with the utmost attention and deepest thought; and you should love it as you have never loved anything else. For, indeed, as Allah has conveyed to me* الخير كله في القرآن *i.e. all the good lies in the Qur'an. All kinds of good are to found in it - and this is the truth.'*

It is therefore essential that we commit ourselves to carry out a real practical reformation within ourselves, precisely in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, otherwise the Jama'at will not be able to progress.

As Ahmadi Muslims, you are expected to set the highest example of goodness, honesty, integrity and most importantly - piety and righteousness. This is a Community which has been established by Allah Himself, for the revival of true Islam and for the service of humanity.

In this regard, the Promised Messiah peace be upon him has emphasised:

> *'The purpose of their joining the Movement and establishing with me a relationship like that of a disciple is that they should achieve a high degree of piety and righteousness. No wrongdoing or mischief should ever come near them. They should offer the five daily Prayers regularly and in congregation, and should not lie nor hurt anyone by their tongues. They should not be guilty of any kind of vice and should not let even a thought of mischief, wrongdoing or transgression pass through their minds. They should shun every type of sin, offence, undesirable speech and action, as well as all egoistic passions and unruly behaviour. They should become pure-hearted, harmless and meek servants of Allah Almighty, and no poisonous germ should flourish in their beings.' [Essence of Islam, Vol. IV, pp. 349 – 250]*

I also wish to remind you of your responsibilities regarding preaching. Tabligh is essential for every Ahmadi and your own good example is essential in the success of our Tabligh efforts. So if your actions will be in accord with the teachings of Islam and your every word and deed will be in accord with the dictates of the Holy Quran, and will be in the shape and form that the Promised Messiah *peace be upon him* desired of you, then this will open up new avenues of conveying the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat to the people of the United States in particular, and the world in general.

I urge you to listen regularly to my Friday sermons and my addresses at various events. This will enable you to strengthen your attachment and loyalty to the blessed institution of Khilafat. You should also teach your children about the special blessings of Khilafat and encourage them to remain in contact with, and be continually devoted to the Khalifa of the time. Today, the task of revival of Islam can only be performed by adhering to the system of Khilafat. Therefore, you should always strive to uphold this noble institution and ensure that you and your future generations always remain within the blessed guidance and shelter of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.

As I reminded you in my sermon of last Friday, you should endeavour to maintain the high level of intensity of prayers you accomplished during the month of Ramadhan, and pray especially for the oppressed and relentlessly persecuted Ahmadis in Pakistan. Only our fervent, impassioned and heartfelt prayers can assure peace on earth. This is because the permanence of this world is associated with the triumph of Ahmadiyyat, for the Muslim Ummah to receive Allah's blessings is associated with Ahmadiyyat, and the end of persecution is also associated with it. Whether it is the freedom of Palestinians or liberation of Muslims from tyrannical rulers, only the prayers of Ahmadis can guarantee it. Currently Ahmadis are the most persecuted people and this is why our prayer will be the prayer of مضطر (*muztir* the distressed person)– and not only can it be a source of our liberation but also a source of removing persecution of mankind. May Allah bless you all.

Wassalam

Yours sincerely

Mirza Masroor Ahmad
KHALIFATUL MASIH V

Ref: T. 3372
13-8-14

66th JALSA SALANA, USA

Held at Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex Harrisburg

(August 15-17, 2014)

Report by: *Kalimullah Khan*

Formation of Team and Preparation

Al-Hamdulillah, the arrangements for the *Jalsa Salana,* USA 2014 were undertaken well ahead of time under the leadership and guidance of Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar Sahib, *Ameer Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA, who directed Wasim Haider to continue his responsibilities as *Afsar Jalsa Salana* and Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad as *Afsar Jalsa Gah* and Dr. Bilal Rana as *Afsar Khidmat-e-Khalq*. These three *Afsaran* then formed their teams of *Naib-Afsaran, Nazimeen* and *Muavineen* to take care of the responsibilities of multifarious nature for *Jalsa* Salana through various *Nizamats*. These *Afsaran*, *Naib-Afsaran* and *Nazimeen* met several times during the six weeks prior to *Jalsa* to chalk out plans with mutual consultations and to iron out the last year's deficiencies noted down in the red book. *Masha Allah*, with their hard work, dedication and devotion all the arrangements were well in place ahead of time.

Program

Under the chairmanship of *Ameer* USA, a program team, consisting of Dr. Zaheer Bajwa, Maulana Azhar Haneef and Mirza Ehsan Ahmad met many times and after deliberation a program was finalized, including topics, speakers and time. *Ameer Sahib* also approved the program for *Lajna Jalsa* proceedings as well. An attractive program brochure was then printed in a beautiful design which carried the photo and brief description of the Promised Messiah[as], and the purpose of *Jalsa Salana*. It also carried photo of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] and his message. In some sections, various photographs from previous *Jama'at* activities were printed in color. Furthermore, it carried general contact information and *Jalsa Gah* directions as well.

An eye catching invitation card for the guests was produced on white card stock with an attractive inside titled-' World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace', which carried the timings for the Guest Event and Dinner.

Registration

A well equipped and trained registration team under the leadership of Junaid Shams was actively involved weeks before *Jalsa* dates. It was announced via the Gazette, meetings of various auxiliaries and through *Jama'at* presidents that all participants should try to register on line, for which a *Jalsa* Registration website was created. Members were asked to bring their old plastic Identity Cards which carried their name, code number and *Jama'at,* which also carried a barcode and magnetic strip to help clear passage from security. Despite advance registration on line, volunteers at the registration desks at *Jalsa* site were busy.

Jalsa Gah

The huge *Jalsa Gah* facility is situated at a central location of Harrisburg and can be accessed from all directions. It offers two gigantic halls (one for men, other for *Lajna*) and many conference rooms and rest rooms. This whole facility is centrally air conditioned. It has a large area for parking. Go carts were transporting elderly back and forth from parking lot to *Jalsa Gah* entrance as well.

MTA

Under the leadership of Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah an incredible and dedicated team consisting over two dozen volunteers very efficiently connected the Men's Hall and *Lajna* Hall) by fiber network for live streaming of *Jalsa* proceedings. Global streaming was done through the Internet. High tech equipment was used for production, editing, graph-ics, clip play-back, tweet tagging, recording DVDs, audio mixing and for loading HD pictures for alislam.org. Live streaming of *Jalsa* was through youtube in HD quality in English and Spanish. It was also arranged for non-youtube viewers in Germany, Pakistan, India, The Far East, some African Countries, Australia and New Zealand. Several technologies were used for this purpose. This year they used double handed steady camera. Their roaming team was busy in recording interviews all over.

Physical Arrangements

A host of volunteers were needed to do the physical arrangements during a specific time frame and especially when the facility was about two and a half hours drive from the headquarter. So some *Khuddam* took off a week prior to *Jalsa* and collected the needed material and went there and were accommodated in a hotel. The empty halls were divided by colorful standing curtains and a large hall area was turned into portions, namely the *langar khana*, dining area, book stall, various meeting rooms, and other stalls such as: T*aqwa-Talimul-Qur'an* and *Waqfe-Ardhi*, Ahmadiyya Muslim students Association, *Waqf-e-Nau*, Homeopathy, History in Photography from 1930s - 1950s and 1960s - 1970s, African-American Journey to Islam in Photography, Ahmadiyya Medical Association, Ahmadiyya Architects & Engineers, Review of Religion, The Muslim Sunrise, *Majlis Ansarullah* USA, *Tarbiyyat* and *Tajneed.* On one side there were few sections for *Rishta Nata, Khidmate Khalq, Tahrike Jadid,* Humanity First etc.

At the entrance booths were set up for Registration and Information. *Khuddam* were on duty to check the ID cards, reception, First aid and Blood Drive etc. At the entrance to the Jalsa Gah the guests were checked by volunteers for security and head count.

The hall was decorated with hundreds of large colorful flags of many countries. On the various sidewalls were hung 4x8 banners with quotes from the Holy Qur'an, *Ahadith* and writings of the Promised Messiah[as].

The main *Jalsa Gah* area was carpeted in blue, while hundreds of chairs laid in rows on both sides of the hall in such a way that one could see the huge stage clearly, which was decorated with fresh flowers. A huge blue banner hung behind on which a white painted *Minaratul-Masih* stood tall. Verse 57:22 of the Holy Quran was written on its right side and its English version ("***Vie with one another in seeking forgiveness from your Lord.***"

On the stage there were chairs for the speakers and guests and in the middle a large head table for the presiding official, and a podium for the speaker stood nearby with Islamic creed "*La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasoolullah*" written on it. On the side of the stage a huge LED screen (20x25 feet) offered a live transmission which could be viewed from a distance.

Ameer Sahib Examines the Jalsa Arrangements

On the evening of August 14, 2014 *Ameer Sahib* visited the *Jalsa* Site and met with all *Jalsa Gah* team members including *Lajna* (some 300-350). He highlighted and recognized their team work and stressed upon prayers and mutual cooperation.

Flag Hoisting Ceremony

On Friday, August 15, 2014, at 1:45 pm, *Ameer Sahib* raised the flag of the *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya while Maulana Naseem Mehdi Sahib raised American flag at the same time. There were many guests around who raised many slogans at this occasion. *Ameer Sahib* led them in silent prayers. Twelve *Khuddam* were on duty for guarding the flags.

Jumu'ah and Asr Prayers

The guests started pouring in early from all over the country, so the lunch arrangements were made well before *Jumu'ah* and *Asr* Prayers. Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib, Missionary In-Charge and *Naib-Ameer* delivered the Friday Sermon and led *Jumu'ah* and *Asr* prayers.

After *Surah Al-Fatiha* he recited *Surah Yunus* (10:58-59) and explained that the mercy of Allah is very vast and He is most forgiving. The teachings of Islam are very easy to act upon; you don't have to go to jungles. Good intention is pivotal in Islam. An act with good intention can earn you 10 rewards or it could be700 times or even more – as He could reward you '*Bai Ghair-e-Hisab*'. You can earn 1,000 good deeds by saying '*Subhanallah*', or offering a '*Sadqah*' for the sake of Allah. Not only by spending money but by saying '*Allahu Akbar'*, '*La Houla Wla Quwata'*, *'Subhanallah', 'La Ilaha Illallah', 'Alhamdulillah'.* To further elaborate he mentioned the story of a poor man who did not have money to spend to get the blessings of Allah. The Prophet[saw] of Allah asked him to do 33 times *Subhanallah*, 33 times *Alhamdulillah*, 34 times *Allaho-Akbar*-by doing that 1000 good deeds are added to your account or can have up to 100,000 times or more. He also mentioned how Professor Sufi Bisharutur-Rahman Sahib used to say '*Subhanallah*' very slowly, and used to ponder on the bounties of Allah. There is a difference between saying quickly and pondering over it. In the same way, doing *'Wudu'* carefully and properly, leads to '*Taubatun Nasuh'*- and then saying '*Shahadah*' can open 8 doors of

paradise. Even one careful '*Wudu*' can change our lives. He then narrated the story mentioned at the time of '*Mi'raj*', where Hadhrat Bilal[ra] was going in front of the Holy Prophet[saw] who was going with Hadhrat Ibrahim[as].

If we say '*Durood*' once, angels say '*Durood*' on him (Prophet of Allah) and 10 good deeds are added and 10 bad deeds are removed. If you recite even one letter of the Holy Qur'an – '*alif, laam, or meem*', you get 10 times reward. If you finish the Holy Qur'an one time, 3.2 million good deeds are written for you. .

Exhibition

Arrays of decorative 7 feet tall displays arranged on both sides of the red carpet running throughout the length of 200 feet long walkway of the main *Jalsa Gah* were captivating. The theme of the Exhibition was 'World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace'. The displays presented sequentially the landmark events from the annals of Islamic and Ahmadiyya history; services to mankind and its gradual spread. Hazoor's visits to various countries, meetings, speeches and inaugural events were projected continuously. Tour guides briefed visitors on Hazoor's speeches and letters written to various world leaders warning them of impending global nuclear conflagration emanating from unjust and inhumane financial and political policies and urging them to pursue policies grounded in equality, justice and religious freedom.

Waqfe Nau Program

A few programs were held at *Jalsa* site for boys and girls (separately) on Friday and Saturday.

Boys Class: (at men's side) was attended by 200 (including parents) where "Conditions of Bait and its practical application in daily life" were presented and discussed. Plaques were given to *Waqfeen* who had completed the first recitation of the Holy Qur'an since last *Jalsa* 2013. Chocolates were given to all children.

Waqfe Nau Test and Rededication: A test for *Jamia* applicants was taken under the supervision of the Principal of *Jamia* Canada- Hadi Ali Chaudhry Sahib. Furthermore, a rededication workshop was arranged by National Secretary *Waqfe Nau*, Hafiz Samiullah Sahib. The Rededication program on the ladies side for *Waqifat* (above 14) was attended by 75 *Waqifat* and 10 *Lajna* members. It is worth mentioning that two *Waqifat* had the honor to recite the Holy Qur'an in the morning and evening sessions on the *Lajna* side.

Waqfe Nau Stall: Separate booths were set up in men and ladies side, where general information, Career Counseling and '*Tajneed*' update arrangements were made along with religious knowledge games.

Opening Session (Friday Afternoon- August 15, 2014)

The opening session was presided over by Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer Jama'at* USA, and started with recitation from the Holy Qur'an (*Al-Fath* 48:29-30) by Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhry followed by its English translation by Yaseen Sharif. Mansoor Ahmad Rafiq recited a portion of Promised Messiah's[as] poem. "*Taqwa yehi hai yaro ke Niqwat ko chor tho – Kibro-gharoor-o-bukal ke adat ko chor tho*" in his melodious voice. Its English translation: (Friends, righteousness is in abandoning haughtiness; in abando-ning audacity, arrogance and miserliness) was red out by Khalid Asad.

A Message from Hazoor

Maulana Azhar Haneef was then directed by *Ameer Sahib* to read out a very special message received from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] for this occasion. He read out this heart warming and faith lifting message in such an impressive way that everybody listened to it with rapt attention.

In a nutshell, it directed towards self evaluation and reformation by adhering to the highest principles of *Taqwa* (righteousness) in our lives. Our daily behavior must be accessed to see that our words match our deeds to become a true representative of Islam. Be mindful of the five daily Prayers, be gentle to our wives and keep the trust. Do not take a single step contrary to the Holy Qur'an. Study the Holy Scripture with utmost attention for all the good is found in the Holy Qur'an. *Tabligh* is essential for each and every Ahmadi. Listen to Khalifatul Masih's[aba] Friday sermons regularly. Always remain under the shelter of *Khilafat*. (*The full text is printed separately).*

Opening Remarks of Ameer Sahib

"We Ahmadis are fortunate that we are endowed with both '*Ilmul-Yaqeen*' and '*Haqqul-Yaqeen*', and have pledged at the hands of '*Khilafat*', and as such must listen and act upon the instructions Hazoor has brought to our attention. Maulana Azhar Haneef has very well read all of those. Follow what Hazoor is asking us to do.

In the end he pointed out that, Hazoor said that the salvation of the

entire world depends on the prayers of Ahmadis and with those prayers a great change will usher in. *Insha Allah.* He then led in *Dua'a. (The full text of the address is printed separately in this issue).*

Maulana Shamshad Ahmad Nasir: "To Err is human; To Forgive is Divine". After reciting a portion of a verse from the Holy Qur'an "Muhammad[saw] is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, tender among themselves"- (*Sura Al-Fath* 48:30), he said that topic of his speech is a famous line of an English poet Alexander Pope.

His whole speech was centered to this pivotal and virtuous quality of pardoning the wrongs of our fellow beings. To subdue the inclination of revenge and to strengthen the quality of forgiving others may turn the ill-feelings into goodwill, animosity into friendship, sorrow into joy and defeat into victory. It is all possible only if we reflect over the teachings of the Holy Quran, examine the actions and sayings of the Holy Prophet of Islam and ponder over the life and writings of the Promised Messiah[as], and mold our lives accordingly.

The learned scholar then referred to the Holy Qur'an and said that forgiveness and kindness is the trait of righteous people, as Allah says: "Let them forgive and pass over the offence"- (*Al-Nur* 24:23). He also mentioned multiple *Ahadith* relating to the subject e.g. 'Allah does not have mercy on a person who does not have mercy on people" (*Bukhari*), "Refrain from greed, miserliness and rancor because these things destroyed those before you, leading them into bloodshed desecration."(*Musnad*) , etc. Afterwards, he quoted a few passages from "*Seer -atul Mahdi*," and "Our Teaching" wherein the Promised Messiah has stressed upon to be humble, kind, gentle, and sympathetic towards all in many of his voluminous works.

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi: "Prophet Muhammad[saw] - an Oasis of Mercy for his Companions". After reciting a portion of the Holy Qur'an (*Sura Al-Taubah-* 9:128) he mentioned that multifarious changes have been coming in this world, in many forms and shapes, since time immemorial. Sun has been shining for billions of years. What if the heat does not get to the earth? The earth will become barren and life will parish. Without the spiritual light and water human beings are akin to dead. Similarly, a phenomenal change occurred some 1500 years ago which transformed the dead into the alive – that was the birth of the Holy Prophet[saw]. (30:50). Though, human beings existed but they were devoid of humanity, and God had been forgotten. All vices and immorality was prevalent. In a nutshell, the world was spiritually dead. Then, with Allah's mercy His bright light pierced the darkness and through the Holy Prophet[saw] (as a bright sun- *Siraje Munir-33:47)* humanity was again brought into light of real life with mercy (21:108). He transformed the lives around him like a sun which gives warmth and light to nourish and grow the plantation. He gave them heavenly light- "*La ilaha illallah*", and told them that Allah is most forgiving and merciful (3:32).

The learned speaker narrated a dozen of instances, well recorded in history, to show how the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] treated his companions, women folk and children with kindness, showed mercy and tolerance.

Dr. Faheem Younus Qureshi: Conquering Hearts Through Love – Inspiring Examples from our Khulafas The learned speaker recited a verse from the Holy Qur'an (Al-Imran 3:160). In a point blank, he mentioned that in the present age people are so dependent on insurance that without it, they feel unsecured. He narrated the story of Hadhrat Abu Huraira[ra] that how he was hungry and stood outside *Masjid-e-Nabawi* with hunger pangs asking Sahaba the meaning of a verse which urges believers to feed the hungry. Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] and Hadhrat Umar[ra] told him the meaning and went by. Prophet of Allah, watching through his window asked him if he was hungry and provided him food. This is how the hearts are conquered. This is the Insurance we need. This is the care we need. Is there any insurance which covers that?

Ahmadis are fortunate that they accepted the Promised Messiah[as] and are attached to *Khilafat*—which provides the love of a father, affection of a mother, guides us to save our souls. He then narrated few moving, uplifting and faith inspiring incidents of *Khulafa* highlighting their deep affection, immense care, pure love and profound concern for the members of the *Jama'at.*

In the end, the eloquent speaker pointed out that, this spiritual insurance is not free. We have to pay the premiums – and that is – we have to follow what *Khalifa* says.

Morning Session – (Saturday August 16, 2014): Presided by Dr. Hamidur Rahman

The session started at 10:00 a.m. with the recitation of the Holy

Qur'an by Maulana Salman Tariq who recited verses 6:163-166 of the Holy Qur'an and its English translation was read out by Jason Elsea. Maulana Faran Rabbani recited a Persian poem, "*Bakoshad aye Jawanaa ta badeen quwat shwad paida – Baharo rawnaq ander rozey milat shwad paida*", of the Promised Messiah[as] in his melodious voice. The English translation -"O Youth! Strive so that the faith may become rejuvenated – (and that) spring and brilliance may blossom over the (Spiritual) Garden of Islam", was read out by Uthman Villegas in a very impressive and motivated tone.

Maulana Noman Rana: God is Near – The Inspiring Power of Prayer The speaker - a young' *murabbi*', recited a portion of the Holy Qur'an: "*And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the prayers of the supplicant when he prays to Me.*" (*Al Baqarah* 2:187), and in explanation pointed out that here the word '*Ibadi*' is used – which means my servants, and it applies to those who are willing to obey all His conditions and those who believe in Him; and in turn God says He will accept their prayers. So, the one way that our prayers are accepted is to ensure that our lives and our actions are according to God's commandments.

A prayer is a wonderful thing. A way of God's showing miracles for His servants. The world witnessed this during the entire life of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The learned speaker read out a famous and pertinent portion from one of the Promised Messiah's[as] marvelous books: '*Barakatud-Du'a*', in which he has beautifully and expediently depicted the pathos of the prayers of the Holy Prophet[saw], which created an amazing change in the world.

Rashid Ahmad: The Passion of Serving Khilafat After reciting '*Bismillah*' he introduced himself and narrated his interesting life story and journey to Ahmadiyyat. He converted to Ahmadiyyat in 1947 and was first American to travel to Pakistan to study in '*Jamia*', where he spent significant amount of time living and serving Khalifatul Masih II[ra]. Later he served as a Missionary to US *Jama'at*. He is 91 years old now and resides in Milwaukee. As a young man, on the streets of Chicago, he lead a life of wheeling and dealing. A change then led him to think of a higher meaning in his life and the key to unlock this higher meaning was education.

After visiting the Ahmadiyya mosque on Wabash Avenue, South side of Chicago, he thought it to be a right place for him and accepted Ahmadiyyat. He then wanted to dedicate his life to this faith (Ahmadiyyat). He wrote to Khalifatul Masih II[ra] expressing his interest. He received a reply clearly indicating that, "The task is very sacred and noble indeed, but instills very heavy responsibilities and therefore, requires an honest and careful consideration etc, etc."

He talked about his visit to Pakistan and his stay in Rabwah.

Dr. Basiyr D. Rodney: an Urgent Call to Save our Nation He recited a short verse from the Holy Qur'an: {And who is better in speech than he who invites men to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely of those who submit'}. (*Ha Mim Sajdah- 41:34*). He pointed out that in this verse Allah has given a formula for '*Dawate ilallah*' and how to save a nation from many social diseases. First, is '*Dawate ilallah*'. Second, is '*Taqwa*'. Third is doing good works (*amalus saliha*).

Then he threw light on benefits of '*Dawate ilallah.*' Firstly, it enables one to become a true practicing Muslim. Secondly, If we don't- then our society or nation will remain ignorant of the beauties of Islam and moral decline will linger on which is detrimental to society. Thirdly, it strengthens us spiritually.

We must call our people away from the fire – fire of war at home and abroad, fire of have and have not's, the fire of disparity, the fire of injustices between one race or another. The Holy Prophet[saw] – the '*Sirajun Munir*' came to dispel this darkness from the world.

Dr. Bilal Rana: - Practical steps for Self Reformation: After reciting a portion of *Sura Al-Maidah* (5:27) he said that about 1/4th of earth is covered with sand and the animals adapt to the harsh environment in order to survive. Prophet Moses[as] led the Israelites out of the bondage of slavery from Pharaoh into the desert of Egypt. Instead of being thankful, they became arrogant and ungrateful to Allah. When they were tried, they became rebellious, lazy and cowardly. So, because of their disobedience and they were left to roam about in desert for 40 years. Unless one has a personal loving relationship with Allah, the process of going forward cannot work.

He mentioned the moving story of Hadhrat Maulvi Burhanuddin Jehlumi[ra], who had gone through so many spiritual attempts before he accepted the Promised Messiah[as].

We read the Holy Qur'an, read *Hadith*, listen to Hazoor's *Khutbaat* and are inspired by all of these. Somehow, for us, self reformation still remains a problem. In point blank, he said that, there is no quick fix. Whatever aspect you want to improve upon, it will take deliberate intentional practice.

He pointed out that Promised Messiah[as] has mentioned two sins men are prone to: (i) sins of the flesh, (ii) sins of ego. Shun away anger and arrogance and be humble. Curb the domestic violence and follow the 4th Condition of *Bai'at*. .

Maulana Talha Ali – Establishing a Living Faith in God: After reciting some portions of the Holy Qur'an (3:32 and 18:111) he mentioned that Allah has ingrained His stamp on human soul and then He calls them to witness, (7:173). The Promised Messiah[as] has explained this phenomenon that everybody has this hole of Love of Allah. Some people argue that, it is impossible to find Allah, while others say; He does not talk any more. But the God presented by the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet[saw] and the Promised Messiah[as] is a Living God – Who not only speaks but wants to speak to every one of His servants. As Allah has given a deep desire and a thirst of His love, so does He provide the way to quench that thirst as well. Allah says, "And *as for* those who strive in Our path–We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily Allah is with those who do good." (*Al-Ankabut* 29:70). It clearly shows that we have to strive hard in his way. Some people say it is impossible to become a 'Wali' or friend of Allah, or a Saint. But Allah says, "He is Wali of every believer". He read out the translation of the verse he recited earlier (18:111) and reiterated his point that, if we want a living relationship with Allah, we must follow the example of the Holy Prophet[saw] in letter and spirit which may lead you to become '*Wali*'. He referred to the example of Maulvi Burhanuddin Sahib[ra] who found the water (A Living God- thru- Promised Messiah) to quench his thirst.

Two practical and fundamental aspects of developing a relationship with Allah were mentioned. **The first is**: '*Maarefat*'(a true understanding of Allah). **The second aspect is**: We develop a true love of Allah in our hearts. The Promised Messiah has mentioned two things for which a man loves someone – (i) for beauty, (ii) because of their benevolence. Allah is most beautiful and most benevolent. A true repentance is a must. It is written in '*Tazkiratul-Aulia*' that thousands became Saints after true repentance.

In closing he said that, "To save the world from self destruction, it is imperative that we lead humanity to A Living God".

Afternoon Session – Saturday, August 16, 2014

This session presided over by Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer USA, started with a recitation from the Holy Quran (Yunus 10:25-27) by Mubashir Hafeez and its English translation was read out by Bashir Asad. Then a few couplets from Promised Messiah's[as] Urdu poem '*Ab chor tho jihad ka aye dosto khyal*" written in 1902, were recited by Kaleem Bhatti in his very perspicuous voice, and its English rendering - 'Abandon the thought to engage in war now, O friends forbidden to battle. Now the Messiah has come who is the Imam of the faith. Now is the end of all religious wars', was read out by Ahmad Nooruddin.

Maulana Naseem Mahdi: Khalifa of Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad:Ambassdor of World Peace- After reciting *Sura Fatihah* and some portions of *Sura Al-Maidah* 5:9) he made it clear that whatever he would say will be based on "World Crises and the Pathway to Peace", which is a compilation of Speeches and Letters to the International World Leaders by Supreme Head of Ahmadiyya *Jama'at*, who has been working tirelessly ever since he became *Khalifa* – a Spiritual Head of Ahmadiyya Community, of some 160 million Muslims found in more than 200 countries.

He said that there is no global leader of such stature, who without fail, guides million of his followers every week to work tirelessly to promote peace in all countries.

The world is in turmoil – the list of conflicts is surmounting; Israel, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, N. Korea, and the list goes on and on. The whole of the Middle East is ablaze; Unrest in Africa is destabilizing the States. Economic crisis are very grave destabilizing Major Corporations with global consequences. Default of sovereign debts, shrinking of Vulture Fund for the poorest of the poor nations, unjust treatment of resource -rich poor nations, immigration, economic refugees etc., etc. The similarities before the WW II continue and events are moving at an unprecedented pace towards a horrific WW III. The consequences of

the Nuclear War would be catastrophic. Under these circumstances,

After mentioning a life sketch of His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba], he mentioned that he has led a worldwide campaign to convey the peaceful message of Islam using all resources and media outlets. A National Peace Symposium was launched in UK for this purpose in 2004.

Guest Remarks and Presentation of Ahmadiyya Muslim Humanitarian Award

Amjad Mahmood Khan (National Secretary Public Affairs) welcomed and introduced some special guests, dignitaries, Public Officials and friends. He then invited the guests one by one to speak:

Ms. Patty Kim, Member of Pennsylvania House of Representatives thanked and said that world will be better place if world leaders strive for peace, promote justice, and advocate rights for women. A citation was presented to *Ameer Sahib* by her, from PA House representatives, proclaiming that "You must be applauded for advancing Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom in the face of opposition".

Mr. Shaarik Zafar, Special Representative to Muslim Communities – US State Department- for John Kerry. He said *Salaam*, thanked us and told us that he attended *Jalsa* at VA as well. Ahmadiyya has a track record of providing Health Services to humanity and has a long tradition of promoting peace, education and vocational training and harmony. Muslims for Peace is fantastic campaign. I will remain engaged working with your community for promoting peace.

2014 Ahmadiyya Humanitarian Award

This Humanitarian Award was established in 2011. It is given to an individual who assists oppressed and disadvantaged communities around the world and protects the Universal Human Rights. Two individuals were honorees for 2014 award,

Hon. Andre Carson: US Congressman (D-IN). He thanked us for this honor. He had an honor to meet Hazoor at Capitol Hill in 2012. The first Qur'an commentary he read was that of the Ahmadiyya community. Since then he has a great regard because of their beliefs. Ahmadiyya Community is dedicated to improving our community and promoting peace. (He was not present to receive his award, yet he sent a video-link which was displayed).

Dr. Robert George: Vice-Chair for US Commission on International Religious Freedom. He assisted in the release of Ahmadis from the Middle East some 2 years ago. The war on Ahmadis is a global war for totalitarianism. He condemned all atrocities committed against Ahmadis in all part of the world and acknowledged that Ahmadis put their beliefs in action and literally gave 25,000 bags of blood in honor of 9-11 victims. Ahmadi friends! Let us fight together against those who speak in name of God, yet dishonor God. May God richly bless you. (He received his award from *Ameer Sahib*).

Humanity First - Munum A. Naeem, Executive Director: He pointed out that since the inception of the Ahmadiyya Community; some 115 years ago it has been serving mankind. 'Humanity First' was established in 1995 and now has branches in 37 countries, and the vision is that one day it will be bigger than 'Red Cross'. A slide show was then presented, which highlighted the services rendered in the hard hit areas of the world, when disaster, tsunami and hurricanes hit in various parts of the world, e.g. Haiti, Pakistan etc., where 550,000 people were helped. Food, shelter and medicine was provided. In various parts of Africa, help built schools; dig wells, installed solar power filtration plants, hand-pumps for fresh water. Built hospitals, trained people in technical areas, treated the impaired and blind. Fresh water was arranged for 2.5 million. Medical care was extended to 210,000. Provided technical training to 48,000, and helped 180,000 students. Provided aid and promoted women farmers. He announced the names of some 17 recipients of 'Presidential Award' for this year-(awards signed by President Obama). These individuals have devoted some 750,000 hours of voluntary work.

Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura: Under Secretary-General, UN She thanked us for the invitation and mentioned that she served in the Government of Sierra Leone for 20 years. She was a Foreign Affairs Minister for a few years. She has met Hazoor two times, and works very closely with our community in New York, from where she collected some 1000 books to be shipped to her country. She is one of the beneficiaries of Ahmadiyya health and education services.

Her Excellency Ms. Oliver Wonekha: Uganda Ambassador to the US She served as a Member of Parliament for a few years. She

thanked, congratulated and gave a testimony that since 1935 Ahmadiyya has contributed in the field of education and health, which is very much appreciated. Good wishes from her country were extended.

His Excllency Mr. Bockarie Kortu Stevens – Sierra Leone Ambassador to US: He is the Ambassador since 2007. He thanked and congratulated and mentioned that since 1937 Ahmadiyya community is fostering hospitality and tolerance, they built hundreds of schools, hospitals and clinics. Contribution to education is a worthy chapter in the history of Uganda. The President of Uganda went to Bo for two days meeting with Ahmadiyya members and directed me to extend congratulations on this occasion. Your community always preached tolerance, peace, respect for others and unflinching patriotism which are the hallmark of humanity at its best.

Mr. James Matayoshi – Mayor of Rongelap Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands: After greetings he appreciated that his country is honored to receive the Ahmadiyya community and appreciates the work done by 'Humanity First'. There are many things to be done relating to education, health and in the social service area. I will personally welcome any of your persecuted family members to my country and city to safeguard them.

Mr. Ken Berkowitz – Chief of Police, Canton, Massachusetts: He is delighted, humbled and honored to address this gathering. Several years ago he attended a *Ramadan* party and met many friends. He befriended the Ahmadiyya community when they responded to the attack and shooting during the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013, and mobilized a blood drive for the victims. We must take a page from your philosophy- your consciousness, decency, peace and tolerance is truly a benchmark for all.

Amjad Mahmood Khan announced and recognized a few more guests and stated that over 200 non-Ahmadi guests participated and we had 20 guest speakers. We received 6 proclamations for this occasion and over two dozen letter and 5 video messages from members of the House, Senate and Congress along with some other dignitaries including the 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Caucus'-(which was launched on February 27, 2014). All the honorable guests were then directed for dinner where 10 speakers spoke.

Ameer Sahib's Closing Remarks: He thanked all the guests who came and made their comments. He reminded the Ahmadi members to see where we stand as a believer of the Messiah of the Age? He pointed out that the excellence of man comes from their love of One God and love of fellow men- which must be shown by our behavior and our conduct; as we show in 'Humanity First'. We pray for all mankind, not only for the victims of 'Gujranwala', but also pray for those who are inflicting pain on us – this will give rise to God's mercy. We seek forgiveness from God Almighty.

Mushaira

After dinner and *Isha* Prayer a *Mushaira* organized by Nasir Jameel, Chief-Coordinator of MALA (Mid-Atlantic Association for Literature Appreciation) was held in the main *Jalsa* Hall. The *Mushaira* was chaired by the chief-guest from Pakistan- an eminent Urdu poet, scholar, Professor Mubarak Abid. Over 200 men and women enjoyed this evening. Before the *Mushairah* officially started Nasir Jamil announced with a short introduction, that this year six new books have been published and are available:

i- "*Gulistan Hara Bhara*" (Urdu) by: Maulana Mubashar Ahmad,.
ii- "*Rawzan-e-Khayal*" (Urdu) by: Kalimullah Khan.
iii- "*Sharafat-e-Mansoor*" (Urdu) by: Dr. Mansoor A. Malik.
iv- "*Twenty-Five - A Husband's Tribute to His Wife*" (Urdu) by: Shukoor Ahmed.
v- "*Optimal Xperience - Art of the FOCUS Method*" (English) by: Mazhar Ahmad.
vi-"*The Tapestry of Life*" (English) by: Shabnam Ahmed.

After a few local poets presented their wonderful poetry, the honorable guest recited his profound and meaningful poetry in his typical yet lyrical tone. The audience was ecstatic about his poetry and demanded many more poems from him till the closing at 12:00 at night.

Sunday August 17, 2014 – Final Session- Presided by: Ameer Sahib USA

The final *Jalsa Salana* session started with a recitation of the Holy Qur'an (62:156) by Hafiz Mubarak Kukoyi and Bilal Abdul Salam offered its English translation. An Urdu poem of the Promised Messiah[as] – '*Aye Khuda ay karsazo aib posho kirdegar*', (written in 1908) was recited by Khalid Minhas in his impressive tone and its English translation was read out by Umar Shaheed.

Talent Award Ceremony:

National Secretary *Talim*, Nasir Mahmood Malik came on the

stage and announced that Dr. Muhammad Ali Mumtaz and his team worked diligently in selecting the award winners from many gifted and talented students whose percentile score was in the top 97-99 in ACT or had a very high GPA. He then announced that 7 men and 2 ladies were selected for the Talent Gold Medal Awards for 2014, while 2 men got the Talent Recognition Awards for 2014. They got their award from Respected Ameer Sahib.

Majlis Ansarullah, Majlis Atfalul Ahmadiyya and *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* received awards from *Ameer Sahib,* which were given to small, medium and large *Jama'ats* respectively. *Alam-e-Inami* for *Ansarullah* was to be shared by two *Jama'ats:* Willingboro and Dallas; while *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* – LA East won the *Alam-e-Inami*. In *Atfalul Ahmadiyya*: The first position of the following *Jama'ats* was recognized: Central Jersey (large *Jama'at*)- Seattle (medium *Jama'at*)- Pittsburgh (small *Jama'at*). The *Qaideen* of wining *Jama'ats* had a chance to shake hands with *Ameer Sahib*.

Irfan Alladin – Security in the Fortress of the Messiah: He recited a verse of the Holy Quran (*Sura Takwir*, 81:30) and drew the attention towards the turmoil in the world where thousands of lives are being lost due to one reason or another. Epidemics plague, HIV/ AIDS was on rampage, and now Ebola is causing a devastating blow. One wonders, what and where is the panacea for all the ills? How to overcome the upheavals and catastrophic events in the world? He referred to a book written by the Promised Messiah[as] 'Our Teachings' in which a promise is given for all those who enter his home. It is not necessarily the mud and brick house, but means a spiritual house. To be worthy to enter into this fortress (the house of the Promised Messiah[as]) requires stringent conditions to follow. He mentioned the basic three, leaving aside others.

Maulana Azhar Haneef – Life Giving and Living Witness for Allah: After reciting a verse of the Holy Qur'an (*Al-Imran* 3:54) he mentioned that these days fervor is aroused at many a places, to become a *'Shaheed'* and earn a paradise. This delusion is providing jihadists in the form of suicide bombers with no end in sight. The word martyr in Greek means to bear witness- and the Arabic word is *Shaheed.*

The learned speaker referred to a few *Hadith* and made it clear that, the meaning of *Shaheed* is not limited to martyrdom, but a person who is steadfast in his sacrifices in the cause of Allah and desires martyrdom with a sincere heart will be included in that category even if he dies in his bed. .

He narrated a spine chilling story of the conversion of Abu Dharr (from Islamic History) and a recent case of Abdul Lateef (of Sharjah) and pointed out that these are the true believers – these are the *Shuhadaa*. USA *Jama'at* is not devoid of *Shuhadaa* — Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar.

Dr. Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad – Zikre-Habib-Bringing the Dead back to Life: He recited a portion of the Holy Qur'an (*Al-Mumin*-40:69) and dealt with the subject by pointing out that God Almighty sends His messengers to show His presence. The most perfect of all, with the most perfect Book was our Prophet Muhammad[saw]. He performed miracles and resurrected spiritually dead souls and turned them into God-fearing people.

The learned speaker pointed out that the Promised Messiah[as] elaborated on the term –"raising the dead" in two ways: (i) to give spiritual life, (ii) through prayers, bring back to life to those who were at death's door. Then he mentioned some five instances of miracles shown at his hand and three miracles shown at the hands of his devout followers (*Sahabara*).

Closing Remarks of Ameer Sahib: Though *Jalsa Salana* 2014 is coming to a conclusion today, yet its fond memories will linger on as we came together, met with each other. We must pay close attention to what Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] is saying, as it has vast consequences for how the *Jama'at* will shape up and how the message of the Messiah will spread globally. It is dependent on how we pay attention to his '*Khutabat'* and try to reflect on that and apply it according to our circumstances.

The attendance is over 7,000 (3100 + ladies) and (3700 + men). Total guests were 336 and 17 countries were represented. May all the guests travel back in safety, and may Allah help them all. He led in silent prayer and with that *Jalsa Salana* USA 2014 concluded.

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PAY ZAKAT

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OPENING REMARKS BY DR. AHSANULLAH ZAFAR, AMEER JAMA'AT USA

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ

اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

There is a narrative of belief, which is of the order of '*Ilmul Yaqeen*' that is knowledge of what is right and wrong. And then there is the stage of '*Haqul Yaqeen*' or the stage of *shahadat* and that is for us as Ahmadis the *Khilafate-e-Ahmadiyya* or pledge of *Bai'at* to the *Khilafat* and to therefore listen to all the instructions which Hazoor has given us or the reminders that he has brought to our attention. And I cannot narrate all of them. Maulana Azhar Haneef Sahib, *Masha Allah* did a very good reading of those. But in essence what Hazoor is asking is that we should live, walk, talk and converse as Ahmadis who believe in the *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* and are listening to his sermons we are doing that he's asking us. And he's asking us to do the good and be the good and let that show to the world around us by our conduct, being honest human beings in this world, by being considerate to other people around us in this world, to care for others and I'll go into a bit more detail about caring for enemies as well and that is what is required of us.

To do that we need to focus on our prayers, on our duties as Ahmadis in the *Jama'at* and paying attention to everything that is being said in this particular meeting today and for the rest of the weekend. The Promised Messiah[as] (and we are believers in his prophet hood and his message and his mission) and the fact that he has spoken for the next 1000 years in his pronouncements and his writings and in his conversation, the *Malfoozat*. That might not be apparent to us because we are living in a small time frame. However, that is the fact and that is what is unfolding as we are going along. We don't know what tomorrow is going to bring but we do know what the next 100 years are going to bring and the 100 years after that. Because the Promised Messiah[as] was told by *Allah Ta'ala* that by the end of the third century, after him, the world will be (I don't want to use the word dominated because I don't know what the specifics are), but it will be a very strong presence in the world at large. It will not be a small movement, which we still are by most criteria. But we know what is coming for us is a very clear pronouncement and there are forces at work we do not see. We don't see the forces that are at work. But which would bring about the changes. However, there is a little part we have to do too in order to make it right.

I go back to the 22nd of December 1891 when the Promised Messiah[as], he wrote in a *Maktoob* dated 22 December 1891 and he says 'I have been appointed for a Divine decision'. He didn't say possibility or what might happen, he said there is a decision and I have been appointed for it. That is the origin of the *Jalsa Salana* and that is the reason and the genesis to as to why he wanted and executed this particular institution in *Jama'at-e-Ahmadiyya*. So the purpose of this *Jalsa* is to manage and to bring about an enforcement of the physical, of the apparent (not the hidden decision that Allah has made) but to bring around the visible changes which are required for Allah's decision to take hold in a manifest way. It is going to take hold anyway. But it is up to us to do certain things in order to make it more effective, more visible and for us to flourish as a *Jama'at*.

It is with that in mind that we need to understand Hazoor's comments, ponder upon them and I request shortly everybody to raise their hands in prayers with me. Do join from the depths of your hearts into these prayers, to follow what he is asking us to do and in particular, remember the Ahmadis, and Hazoor does refer to that, who have suffered throughout the world because of their faith they have been persecuted. And I will specifically bring it around to the recent attack in Gujranwala. There are so many more, there was recently also a very painful event where one of the physicians here in the US, Dr Mehdi Ali Qamar who went to Rabwah to volunteer at his own expense and in his own time, to provide free medical care to the inhabitants of the area, not just Ahmadi families but other inhabitants as well. He was martyred in a very cold-blooded fashion and left a family who grieves for him and a *Jama'at* who feels the pain of the happening as we go forward.

But the incident in Gujranwala is very dramatic; to see people who are of our ethnicity (most of us here in the gathering are from Pakistan, not all, but most of us), they gather together, they lock in a family inside a house, set it on fire and then they are jubilant about it on the outside, proclaiming the same, some of the same slogans that are raised by our audience, of the *'Nara-e-Takbeer'*, that they are bringing out the slogans of *Zindabad* and it is hurtful, not only to see how the family died in that fire but to see that the people who are on the outside are doing this thing and they are so blinded by their hearts. Their hearts are blackened to an extent that they are jubilant about it.

So we need to pray for the Ahmadis who suffered and who are suffering and we need to pray for the people who cannot see the light of the day, who are so blinded by their own situation, whatever it is, which is driving them and they are committing such a horrific act. We need to pray for all of them. As Hazoor pointed out, that the salvation of the entire world depends on the prayers of Ahmadis. And this is not an empty statement, it's real, we need to understand prayers are not like putting a coin in a slot machine and something jumping out on the other side. This is a very deep event which works on the fabric of existence. We need to pray, and with those prayers, with Allah's will, things will change. So with that I will request please join me in silent prayers.

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Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Glen Ellyn Celebrated Eidul Adhia .

Imam Shamshad A. Nasir

Ahmadiya Muslim Community gathered to celebrate *Eidul Adha* on Sunday, October 5th in *Baitul Jamaay* Mosque on Route 53 and Butterfield in Glenn Ellyn. *Eidul Adhia* marks Prophet Abraham's[as] symbolic sacrifice and the close of the *Hajj* pilgrimage to the Holy *Ka'bah* in Mecca. This joyous day is celebrated to remind Muslims of the importance of sacrifice, service to humanity, and gratefulness to God. Members from Chicago and its suburbs gathered to celebrate *Eidul Adhia*. Imam Shamshad A. Nasir delieverd the sermon and led *Eid* prayers in congregation. Nasir shed light on the significance of sacrifice. he said, "Today when the world is on the verge of destruction, there is a dire need to incorporate the quality of sacrifice in ourselves following the foot steps of Abraham[as] and Ishmael[as]. Having this spirit in ourselves we can save our generations and thus can lead to the path of peace and tranquility," said Imam Shamshad A. Nasir, Missionary and President of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA. "As Ahmadi Muslims, we should rectify our hearts through prayers, tolerance and service to humanity," he further added. The celebration came to an end at 11:30 pm.

TO ERR IS HUMAN; TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE

Imam Shamshad A. Nasir

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗۤ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, And those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, tender among themselves. (48:30)

Alexander Pope, an English poet in one of his poems wrote this famous line: "To err is human -- to forgive, divine." This means that making mistakes is part of being human, while the quality of forgiveness is considered godly. My speech today is on developing this pious quality of pardoning the wrongs of our fellow brothers and sisters.

Overcoming the desire to seek revenge strengthens this quality of forgiving others. It starts with letting go of the wrongs done to us.

Choosing forgiveness over getting even is what turns the feelings of sorrow to joy, pain to pleasure, animosity to friendship, ill-will to goodwill and defeat to victory.

You may wonder, *How is this possible?*

The answer lies in the guidance given to us by Almighty God. One only needs to reflect deeply on God's teachings in the Holy Qur'an, examine the actions and sayings of the Holy Prophet[saw], and ponder over the life and writings of the Promised Messiah[as], and learn from their relationships with their companions to see the beautiful gems of guidance awaiting our discovery.

In this Age, the Promised Messiah[as] has said:

"The purpose of my advent is to prepare a Community of true believers who have sincere faith in God. They maintain a living relationship with Him and adopt the Islamic ways and follow the good examples of the Holy Prophet[saw], walking the path of reformation and righteousness. They become great models for the world – so that through this Community, people find the right path and Allah's Will is fulfilled.

"If this objective is not achieved, then even if we completely prevail over our enemies through arguments and logic, then that victory is of no use – the purpose of my advent will remain unattained."

(Seeratul Mahdi, part 1, page 235)

The Promised Messiah[as] has explained to his followers how they can be the best ambassadors of Islam by demonstrating to the world God's mercy and forgiveness through humility, kindness and selfless service to humanity.

The Promised Messiah[as] advised us in "Our Teaching":

"Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His creatures; do not oppress them with your tongue or hands or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind. Never assert yourselves with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone, even though he abuses you. Be humble in spirit – kind and gentle and forgiving, sympathetic towards all and wishing them well, so that you should be accepted...".

(The Promised Messiah[as], *"Our Teaching,"* p.9)

In order to walk the path of righteousness, we must learn to overlook the short-comings of one another and practice forgiveness in our daily lives. Now I will relate to you a few incidents from the companions of the Holy Prophet[saw], and those of the Promised Messiah[as].

Incidents of Forgiveness

Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] looked after and took financial care of a poor man in Medina named Mistah, who later was involved in the sad incident in Islamic history where he was part of a group that slandered Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] the daughter of Abu Bakr and wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw].

When Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] found out about this, he was very upset, declaring he would never help Mistah again. It was right after this event that verse 23 from Surah An-Noor was revealed

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَ
لْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

And let not persons of wealth and means among you swear that they will not give aught to the kindred and to the needy and to those who have left their homes in the cause of Allah. Let them forgive and for bear. Do you not desire that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is most Forgiving, Merciful. (24:23)

When Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] heard the commandments of Allah in this verse, he changed his decision. He atoned for his promise and he continued to assist Mistah and showed goodwill towards him as if no unpleasantness had ever happened between them.

(*Al Bukhari, Kitabul Emaan*)

In the Hadith collections of *Bukhari*, *Muslim* and *Tirmidhi,* there are very similar narrations on showing mercy and forgiveness. Here is a well-known hadith from *Bukhari*:

"Allah does not have mercy on a person who does not have mercy on people." –

(7376 Sahih Bukhari (115/9)

In Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's *"The Mathnawi"* it is written that someone asked Jesus[as]: "What was the hardest thing?" He replied: "God's anger. Even Hell seeks refuge from God's anger." Then he stated: "But the one thing that can cool off God's anger is that, when you become angry at someone, you should control yourself. Because God is not merciful to the one who is not kind to others."

In a related *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said:

On the Day of Judgment, a crier will call out: "Where are those who pardoned the mistakes of others? They should come forward and receive their reward, because the Muslim whose habit was forgiveness deserves Paradise."

Prophet Muhammad[saw] also said: "Refrain from greed, miserliness and rancor because these things destroyed those before you, leading them into bloodshed and desecration."

(Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 3, pg. 323)

In a *Hadith* from *Sahih Muslim,* the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

"O servants of Allah! Be brothers one to another. A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim -- he does not oppress his brother. He does not slander him, nor look down on him."

(*Sahih Muslim,* Kitabul Birri was-Silah, Babu Tahrimi-Zulmil Muslimi Wa Khadhlih)

Commenting on this, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] said:

You should focus on the words 'do not be jealous' for jealousy ultimately leads to hatred. Jealousy is a type of disease that, while it harms the other person, it also consumes the person who is jealous.

For example: Why does some other person have a better business or more wealth or more talented children? With some women, jealousy may arise because of another woman's better appearance or more expensive jewelry.

Even in religious matters -- where good deeds must be valued and where people should strive to excel in rendering service to the religion -- obstacles are often placed in the way of those who are rendering religious service by making accusations against them so that they too are deprived of performing religious service.

The Holy Prophet[saw] compared the *Jama'at* of believers with one body. The Promised Messiah[as] called his followers the green branches of a tree. Do the barren branches of a tree become jealous of those branches that bear fruit?

After a person receives a blessing from God, does one hand turn against the other? Or does one eye become angry with the other? No, of course not! So it is in the case of the body of Ahmadiyyat. Blessings and honors bestowed by God on one Ahmadi are blessings and honors for the whole *Jama'at.*

Any distinction earned by an Ahmadi child for academic or religious accomplishments is a matter of honor for all Ahmadis. Can an Ahmadi, even for a moment, be jealous of Chaudhry Mohammad Zafarulla Khan[ra] Sahib or Dr. Abdus Salam? Never, because we all are honored with their honor.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said:

"You will know the believers by the way they live and carry themselves -- like one body -- with love and compassion. When one organ of the body is not well, then the whole body suffers."

(*Sahih Muslim*)

In *Malfoozat,* we read where the Promised Messiah[as] has said:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] commanded us to pray for each other, even when we are far apart. If we do this, then the angels say: "May your prayers be accepted by God and returned in kind."

What a wonderful thing this is! If a person's prayers are not accepted, then most certainly the prayers of the angels will be. I admonish you all -- there should be no discord among you."

(*Malfoozat* vol.1, pg.366)

Commenting about his high moral expectations of the members of his Community, the Promised Messiah[as] said: "Remember that, until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself, he will not be of my community."

(*Tafsir* Promised Messiah, Vol. 2, pg.137)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] once said: "Just like a magnet and iron cannot stay separate, two believers cannot remain apart. If there is ever a difference of opinion between them, they should settle their differences."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said:

"The one who makes peace first will enter Paradise 500 years before the other."

(*Khutabat-e-Mahmood*, Vol.7, pg.87)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] has advised us that:

"We should resolve to make changes in ourselves, raise our standards, embrace those who are angry with us, and win over those we displease. We must set aside the judgments in our hearts, and pledge to remove all previous objections, and embrace each other in such a manner that we forget all past transgressions."

(*Khutabat-e-Masroor*, Vol.3, pgs.376-377)

Allah honors those who forgive others

The Holy Prophet[saw] said:

"Allah honors the one who forgives the wrongs of others, and by forgiving the wrongs of others, one is not humiliated."

(*Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal* Vol.2, pg.235)

Forgive your brother's sins

Promised Messiah[as] said:

"You should be quick to make peace and forgive the sins of your brother. That person is wicked who is not willing to make peace with his brother. He will be cut off for sowing the seeds of discord. Be humble in your demeanor as though you were in the wrong, so that you might be granted forgiveness."

(*Noah's Ark, Roohani Khazain*, Vol.19, pg.12)

Forgive the sins of the one who wrongs you

The Promised Messiah[as] further says:

"Whosoever has no wish to forgive the faults of those who may have transgressed against him, and desires to feed malice, he is not of my community."

(*Noah's Ark, Roohani Khazain*, Vol.19, pg.19)

Hadhrat Imam Hassan's[ra] example of forgiveness

In a well-known incident in Islamic history, the Qur'anic verse cited from *Surah Al-Imran*, verse 135, was used by a household servant to win his freedom.

It is recorded that once a slave of Imam Hassan[ra] brought a cup of tea for him. As the servant approached Hadhrat Imam Hassan[ra], he accidentally spilled the hot cup of tea on Imam Hassan's head.

Imam Hassan reacted in pain and anger, shooting a sharp glare at the servant. The servant, who was a Muslim, slowly recited: .

وَ الْكٰظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ

Upon hearing that Imam Hassan[ra] said, "I suppress my anger."
The servant then recited:

وَ الْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

invoking the condition of complete forgiveness. Upon hearing that Imam Hassan[ra] said, "I forgive you."

Then the servant recited:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

That only those are beloved of God, who after suppressing anger and pardoning, follow it up with a good deed.

Upon hearing this, he told the servant he was free of any obligation to him. This is the way of those who tread the right path -- that they are freed after spilling a cup of tea!

(*Malfoozat* Vol.1, pg.15 new edition)

Promised Messiah's[as] forgiveness and desire to pardon

Mohammad Akbar Khan Sahib stated that, when he left his hometown and migrated to Qadian, the Promised Messiah[as] hosted his family in his home. The Promised Messiah[as] would usually light several candles at night in his room. Khan Sahib said that his daughter was very young and she once lit a candle and left it on the Promised Messiah's[as] desk. By accident the candle fell down and all the Promised Messiah's[as] documents caught fire and burned. When it was discovered that the Promised Messiah's[as] documents were burned, the household was worried and my wife and daughter were greatly disturbed because Promised Messiah (as) used to place his documents with great care. But when Promised Messiah[as] found out about it, he did not show any anger and said:

"All gratitude is due to Allah that damage was not more extensive."

(*Seerat* Promised Messiah[as]: written by Hadhrat Sheikh Yaqub Sahib Irfani Vol.1, pg.103)

Incident related by Riaz about Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib[ra]

Riaz Ahmad relates: Once my younger brother Sharif Ahmad had an argument and scuffle with Hafiz Abdul Latif Sahib, son of Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib[ra]. Sharif Ahmad came home and reported the incident.

Both boys were in their early years where they at times quarrel with each other, but once they cool off, they resume playing with each other. Therefore, we did not think much of it and merely advised Sharif Ahmad that he should avoid fighting with Hafiz Sahib.

Anyway, the issue seemed to have been resolved. The same day, after *Asr* prayers, there was a gentle knock at the front door. I enquired, "Who is there?" A soft, loving voice replied, "Sher Ali."

I was surprised by his arrival at my door and was speechless for a moment. I opened the door and asked the purpose of his visit. That incredibly humble man proceeded to explain that earlier today Latif and Sharif had a dispute and they had fought with each other. Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib further said he had looked into the matter and found that the party at fault was his son, Latif, and that as his father, he had come to apologize. (Riaz)

Avoiding disputes to keep the peace

One should stay away from unnecessary conversations and not interfere in other person's affairs. By doing so one will be saved from getting involved in disputes.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] has said:

"The beauty of Islam is that one needs to mind one's own business and avoid interference in others affairs."

To stay angry with your brother for more than three days is against the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. And he had said that the one who says "*Salaam*" first is the better among the two.

Two people who meet each other with love, affection and open arms and then depart, Allah's Prophet says their mistakes will be forgiven. That is why Islam prohibits suspicion, jealousy, lies, grudges, back-biting and gossip.

About this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said, "The person who interferes with other people's personal business would not enter Paradise."

(*Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul Adab*)

The Promised Messiah[as] once stated:

"I have always disliked it when a person, in response to rude treatment, went after him relentlessly, with a vengeance. I would rather prefer that person to remain steadfast and silent in response to any abuse. I would also repeatedly remind him that conceited boasting is much hated by Allah Almighty."

(*Malfoozat*)

Upon listening to this statement by the Promised Messiah[as], one brother who was angry with another brother seated nearby, immediately turned to him and said "*As-Salamo Alaikum,*" extended his hand in friendship and reconciliation and made peace with him.

Prayer of Prophet Muhammad[saw]

"O my Allah I am a weak human being. If by mistake, I have caused harm to anyone or have said unkind words to anyone, then may this action of mine become a reason for bestowing mercy on that person -- bestow piety on him and make him walk on the path to Your nearness so that on the Day of Judgment he stands in the shadow of Your blessings."

(*Sahih Muslim*)

A Grand Account of Obedience to Khilafat and of Pardoning one's Brothers

A former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Sir Feroz Khan and his younger brother, Malik Sardar Khan, were non-Ahmadi Muslims, but their older brother, Malik Khan Noon, was Ahmadi.

For some reason, Malik Khan Noon was extremely angry with his two non-Ahmadi brothers -- so much so that he cut off all relations with them. Since Malik Khan Noon enjoyed an honored status in the family, no one dared question his decision to cut off the ties of relationship with his brothers.

Sir Feroz Khan decided to go to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] and requested him to assist him in making peace with his elder brother, Malik Khan Noon.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] sent for Malik Khan Sahib and upon his arrival, advised him that such malice toward, and estrangement from, his brothers was not appropriate.

Hazoor[ra] told Malik Khan Noon he must seek pardon from both brothers, Sir Feroz Noon and Major Sardar. After completing this task, Hazoor[ra] instructed Malik Khan Sahib to report back to him.

Malik Khan Sahib said he initially had strong reservations, but nevertheless, he immediately went and carried

out Hazoor's[ra] directive without any further delay. He first went straight to Sir Feroz Khan's home and sought his forgiveness. The former Prime Minister was so happy to see Malik Khan Sahib that he hugged him and cried with joy and sought his forgiveness in return.

After that, Malik Khan Sahib went to his other younger brother, Malik Sardar's residence. When Sardar sahib saw his elder brother, he too, was overwhelmed with emotion. Malik Khan Sahib sought Sardar Sahib's forgiveness as well.

Malik Sahib hurried back to Hazoor[ra] and reported that he had carried out his commandments. Hazoor[ra] was pleased to hear this and responded:

"You might not have liked what I asked you to do without finding out about the dispute, but the reason was you, Malik Sahib, have taken my *Bai'at*, whereas I only have a social relationship with your two younger brothers, so they have no obligation to me, unlike you."

Hazoor[ra] then referred to a *Hadith*, which states that the one who is the first to reconcile with his brother enters Paradise 500 years early. Hazoor[ra] told Malik Khan Sahib, "So, according to this Hadith, Malik Sahib, you will enter into Paradise 1000 years early. Now, go reflect on what a profitable bargain this has been for you."

(Monthly *Khalid*, Syedna Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] edition, June 2008)

Hadhrat Muslih Mau'ood[ra] advised his followers that:

"For a *Jama'at* to move forward, it is absolutely required for its members to be united. A *Jama'at* cannot make progress until it is united like one person. It matters not whether it is a worldly or religious Jama'at.

"This is so because God has established the principle that a *Jama'at* cannot progress unless and until its members are united, leaving aside all rancor, disputes, animosities, hypocrisies, malice and hostilities."

(Al Fazl International, May 23, 1997)

It is unfortunate that jealousy, malice, and rancor are taking hold in our domestic affairs, even though God desires the family to be a source of comfort, love, and affection.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Satan is certainly your enemy; so, consider him your open enemy."

All Satanic actions lead to malice, jealousy, rancor, and animosity. When this happens, do you realize how much pain our beloved *Khulafa* have felt and the anguish they have suffered?

Listen now to the words of Hadhrat Khalifatul-Masih IV[rh]:

"Once there was a dispute between two Ahmadis in Germany. I spent many nights in much anguish, and I was in so much torment, as though my own children were fighting among themselves. . ."

(Speech delivered at Jalsa Salana Germany, September 10th, 1995)

My dear brothers and sisters: should we not consider and remember that our beloved *Imam* already has more than enough troubles to deal with from others? Let us all work to reform ourselves to reduce the load of worries our beloved *Khalifa* must carry on a regular basis.

Let us all stop for a moment and think about the immense stress and sheer number of worldly and spiritual concerns that occupy every hour of our blessed Imam in his position as *Ameerul Momineen*, overseeing more

than 200 countries and thousands of Ahmadiyya *Jama'ats*.

One day Hazoor[ra] receives news that an angry mob of so-called Muslims has stoned to death a defenseless Ahmadi. Then, on another day, comes the tragic news of the brutal murder of a young son in front of his father, or the targeted assassination of a humanitarian Ahmadi doctor in front of his wife and young son. Or that innocent children have lost the love and protection of their father; or that a newly-wed bride has lost her husband before the henna on her hands has begun to fade. Or that an Ahmadi grandmother and her seven-year -old and eight-month-old granddaughters, and an unborn Ahmadi child -- all have been martyred after more than a dozen Ahmadi homes are attacked and set ablaze by a blasphemy-incensed mob of hundreds on the eve of *Eid* in the sacred month of *Ramadhan.*

These and many other tragedies by the hands of our enemies are continuously afflicting our Imam.

We have no power to stop it. But we can comfort our Imam with our loving affection and prayers, and we can demonstrate to the world the true actions of Muslims – Ahmadi Muslims suffering cruelty, injustice and persecution that too often results in terrible evils against the innocent and the good at the hands of the ignorant and the morally insane.

As Ahmadi Muslims, our survival in the face of such trials can only come about when we become the true examples in Islam of the forgiveness and forbearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and the Promised Messiah[as].

Ahmadi Muslims, our goal and desire must always be to demonstrate to the world "Love for All, Hatred for None."

This goal can become reality when our motto emanates not just from our tongues, but from our hands as well. We are promised this success only through -- and as a direct result of -- the unity we are blessed with by our obedience to *Khilafat* and by the sincere, heartfelt prayers of our members and our *Khalifa*[aba].

As Ahmadi Muslims we must always remember that we may not have the power to stop the evil that assails us, but we can defeat the power of that evil by forgiving those who persecute us, or who shout in jubilation at our deaths in their misguided vision and practice of *Jihad.*

The power of forgiveness to change people's hearts is, in all truth, the supreme manifestation of "Love for All, Hatred for None."

It is this power of love which stops hate and starts the tears of repentance, healing and reconciliation with God. It is this power that every Ahmadi has in their possession at all times and at every instance of violence and persecution and oppression. It is this power of forgiveness that nullifies the power of the evil which spawns the violence, persecution and oppression. It is the pardon granted by the oppressed -- despite the proven guilt of the oppressor -- that breaks the cycle of violence and revenge. This is "Love for All, Hatred for None."

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Qatadah[ra] relates that he accompanied the Holy Prophet[saw] on a journey. They became thirsty and people went far ahead of the Messenger[saw] of Allah. But I remained with the Holy Prophet[saw] that night. The Holy Prophet[sa] prayed saying: "May Allah protect you as you have protected His Prophet."

(Abu Dawud kitabul adab)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD[saw] - AN OASIS OF MERCY FOR HIS COMPANIONS

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi

لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ
عَزِيْزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيْصٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۲۸﴾

The sun has been shining for billions of years. Several planets are revolving around it. Why are the planets circulating around the sun? Imagine if the pull is prevented from reaching the planets. What will happen to the planets?

Change brought about by the Holy Prophet[saw]

We have all seen change, sometimes small and insignificant and sometimes large and consequential. Night into day, winter into spring, hate into love, sorrow into happiness, and defeat into victory. Sometimes the change is for the better and sometimes for the worse. Sometimes it involves individuals and sometimes communities.

A phenomenal change occurred about 1500 years ago the like of which has never been seen before and will likely not be seen again. It can be summed up as change from death to life.

The story of this *Sahabi* pretty much sums it up.

Hadhrat Umr bin Al-As was a companion of the Holy Prophet[saw]. One day when he was nearing his death he became sad and started crying. He explained that there were different periods in his life. The first phase was when he hated the Holy Prophet[saw] and was his staunchest enemy and did not even want to look at him. In the second phase he was completely transformed and fell so much in love with the grandeur, beauty and *Noor* of the Holy Prophet[saw] that he did not have the courage to look at him. Despite living in the Holy Prophet's[saw] company, what he could not even explain properly as to how he looked like.

The world was as if it was dead

The world before the Holy Prophet[saw] was in a miserable state. Human beings existed but humanity was lacking. In the words of the Promised Messiah[as] "God had been forgotten by the people of every country and it had been assigned to avatars, stones, stars, trees, animals, and mortal men and despised creation was seated in the place of that Lord of Glory and Holiness" There was hate, violence, bloodshed, wars, disregard of minorities, slaves, orphans and rights of women. Morals were forgotten. In fact immorality was cherished.

In other words, the world had essentially died. This was the time when God showed mercy and sent spiritual water, his light, the Holy Prophet Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa[saw] to revive and give life to the world again.

فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْىِ
الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْىِ
الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿۵۱﴾

[30:51] Look, therefore, at the marks of Allah's mercy: how He quickens the earth after its death. Verily, the same *God* will quicken the dead; for He has power over all things

Revival through the Holy Prophet[saw]

With Allah's light he started shining as a bright sun (*Siraje Munir*). His light pierced the darkness of that time and signs of life began to appear.

وَّدَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿۴۷﴾

And as a Summoner unto Allah by His command, and as a Lamp that gives *bright* light. (33:47)

Acts of mercy of the Holy Prophet[saw]

How did the Holy Prophet[saw] give life to the world?

Let us go back and look at the Sun again. The sun has a strong pull or attraction and gives them light and warmth. It was indeed the pull of the Holy Prophet[saw], his mercy that started drawing people towards him. He

was sent as

وَمَآ اَرۡسَلۡنٰكَ اِلَّا رَحۡمَةً لِّلۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۝

[21:108] And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.

It is a journey of light, mercy and life, which I will be talking about. I request all of you to follow along and help me complete the circle of life.

What is Mercy indeed? Mercy is to listen, to encourage, to comfort, to forgive, to understand, and to pray. If we look into his life, we will see each of these meanings fulfilled to the fullest.

Even before he could teach them the Quranic principles, his personality, actions and morals had already started the process of transformation. He set new standards of kindness, mercy, and benevolence.

The most significant act of love and kindness is to share the most precious possession. The Holy Prophet[saw] shared it with his people. He drew them towards himself and shared the love of Allah the Almighty. By following his steps one could reach the Almighty and attain salvation.

قُلۡ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ تُحِبُّوۡنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوۡنِىۡ يُحۡبِبۡكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَيَغۡفِرۡ لَكُمۡ ذُنُوۡبَكُمۡ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ۝

[3:32] Say, 'if you love Allah, follow me: *then* will Allah love you and forgive you your faults. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful

He was deeply in love with God and his companions could see God in him. He gave them the principle and slogan of "*la ilaha ilallah*". The *Sahaba* would live and die for it. Usama[ra] was defending against his bloodthirsty enemy and finally able to pin him down and was about to kill him when the enemy said he accepted Islam. Thinking that this was being said in fear of death, Usama[ra] finished his job. He later told the story to the Holy Prophet[saw]. Usama[ra] says that I had never seen the Holy Prophet[saw] so upset. He kept on saying what would you do when the *Kalima* will testify against you on the Day of Judgment and why did you not check inside his heart for his true beliefs.

Let us now take a walk in the streets of Mecca and Medina where our Lord and Master Holy Prophet[saw] used to walk.

An old lady would collect garbage from her home and sit on the roof and wait for the Holy Prophet[saw] to pass by and would than dump it all on him. She would wait for a response. The Holy Prophet[saw] on the other hand would walk on gracefully. She would do it as often as she could. One day the Holy Prophet[saw] passed through the street and garbage was not thrown at him. He got concerned and checked on the lady. She was amazed that it was the same man looking after her. She too was impressed with the kindness and accepted Islam. We need to learn that the garbage can be physical or emotional. We are thrown garbage at daily. We can learn from the example of the Holy Prophet[saw] .

Once the Holy Prophet[saw] was walking in the street. It was really hot. He saw an old lady carrying her luggage on her head. He volunteered and helped carry her bags. He asked her as to why was she leaving town. She said it is because she has heard that there is a magician in town named Muhammad. Once they reached the destination and Muhammad[saw] was about to leave when the lady asked his name. He told her that he was the person because of whom she was leaving town. The lady was so impressed with his kindness that she accepted Islam.

He was particularly merciful towards women. This gender was considered to be a commodity before the advent of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Their status was revolutionized after his advent. "Your mother deserves your best treatment, Paradise lies under the feet of your mother, best among you is one who is best in treating his wife, treat them with kindness as they are crystals". The Holy Prophet[saw] would help his wives doing household chores; mend his own shoes and clothing. He never once physically hurt any of his wives.

He was particularly kind to his wives. He always used to smile and never raised his voice. He helped in the household chores. Would never complain about food even if there was none to be found at home. If he would enter during daytime, he would say *Salaam* loudly. However, if he would enter at night, he would say *Salaam* softly to avoid disturbing her sleep. He would serve food for himself.

He loved and respected his daughters. Whenever Hadhrat Fatima[ra] walked up to him, he would stand up and hold her hand, kiss it and have her sit with him. His love

and mercy could be seen in every relationship. Once his granddaughter Amama was playing with him and climbed up on his shoulders and would not come down. The Holy Prophet[saw] went to the mosque to lead prayers with her on his shoulders. He would put her down when in *rukoo* or *sajda* and than put her back on his shoulders. He would be seen playing with young children, especially his grand children.

The Holy Prophet[saw] loved his companions and treated them with kindness. Abdullah bin Abi Bakr was in the battle of Hunain with the Holy Prophet[saw]. During the chaos his heavy shoe stepped over the Holy Prophet's[saw] foot. In significant pain, the Holy Prophet[saw] moved him away with a stick. Abdullah bin Abi Bakr could not sleep all night because of shame and embarrassment. The next morning the Holy Prophet[saw] called for him. He was very concerned that he will be admonished. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, I am sorry that I hit you with the stick and gave him a gift of 80 goats.

He was always concerned about hurting anybody's feelings. Once in his later years he asked his companions if he owes anything or hurt anybody? He wanted to pay them back and go to Allah the Almighty worry free. The Companions were extremely sad, as they knew what was the message. Imagine how a leader, a Prophet and a king is showing humility. One companion rose and said that he would want to take revenge of an incident when the Holy Prophet's[saw] elbow hurt his side. The Holy Prophet[saw] allowed him. He approached the Holy Prophet[saw] and said that my skin was bare when that had happened. Prophet lifted his shirt to let him. He stepped forward and kissed the side of the Holy Prophet[saw]. O Prophet of Allah I could not even imagine taking revenge. I did not let this opportunity go by."

One day a poor man brought a bunch of grapes to the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] as a gift. The Holy Prophet[saw] ate one, two, three and then the whole bunch of grapes by himself. He did not offer grapes to anyone present. The poor man who brought those grapes was very pleased and left. One of the companions asked, "O Prophet[saw] of Allah! How come you ate all the grapes by yourself and did not offer to any one of us present? The Holy Prophet[saw] smiled and said, "I ate all the grapes by myself because the grapes were sour. If I would have offered you, you might have made funny faces and that would have hurt the feelings of that poor man. I thought to myself that it's better that I eat all of them cheerfully and please the poor man. I did not want to hurt the feelings of that poor man."

He was particularly kind to the poor and needy. One companion Zahir was not only of a dark complexion but also outright unsightly. He used to sell fruit in the streets. The Holy Prophet[saw] once walked up to him and put his arms around him from behind. Zahir initially did not recognize him but later clung himself to the Holy Prophet[saw] for blessings. The Holy Prophet[saw] asked if anyone would pay for his release. Zahir said, O Prophet[saw]! Who would pay for someone worthless like me. The Holy Prophet said that he was worth a lot with Allah.

In the battle of Badr, the Muslims had limited resources. It was decided that there will be one camel for three individuals and they will take turns riding. The other two would walk. The Holy Prophet[saw] also shared his ride despite pleas from the other two companions.

One of the greatest examples of mercy was seen at the time of the fall of Mecca. The Holy Prophet was now the victor. The Meccans were at his mercy. Based on Arab traditions he could have slaughtered everyone. He entered the city riding on a camel with his head bowed down almost touching the camel's back due to humility. The Meccans were really afraid but looking up to this Prophet. Let us look for a moment as to who were the people in front of him. Some of his worst enemies. People who had tortured and dragged Muslims in the streets. People who had even killed Muslim ladies. People who had exiled the Prophet and his family to suffer for a few years. The *Rehamtulil Alameen's* response was *"La tasreeba alikumul Youm"* You are forgiven and you are free to go. This one statement melted and conquered more hearts than any sword could ever do.

He was a mercy for you and me. "I would have recommended *Miswak* prior to every *Salat* but I did not want to cause inconvenience for my *ummat*". Do not eat anything that will give a foul breath when you come to the *Masjid*. He gave us tips and guidance about every little thing in life. From eating with the right hand to the most devoted acts of worship and nearness to Allah. He prayed for his *ummat* and all mankind till his feet would swell up in *Salat*. He would

pray and plead in front of Allah so much so that his cries would become loud as if water was boiling. He took care of his companions like a mother loves her children. He helped them walk and talk and grow stronger and stayed with them as they were growing.

Allah the Almighty took a note of that and had to say:

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death because they believe not. (26:4)

The verse I recited earlier describes his condition clearly. It was extremely painful for him to see people be misguided and move away from their salvation. Along with that he would long for the welfare of his people and was compassionate and forgiving of any shortcomings. He was able to present Godly attributes of compassion and mercy to the world.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

[9:128] Surely, a Messenger has come unto you from among yourselves; grievous to him is that you should fall into trouble; *he is* ardently desirous of your *welfare*; *and* to the believers *he is* compassionate, merciful.

To understand the true significance of his mercy and love for his companion we need to look at his personal situation also. He was an orphan in that age, and a man of little resources. After his claim, his dearest relatives suffered and some were murdered brutally. His people put him in exile in a desert. His people suffered and he lost his uncle and his wife during this ordeal. He had to leave his hometown in the middle of the night. He buried eleven of his children in his life. We are grumpy if we loose an hour of sleep. He was a human like us. Despite all the sufferings he was polite, loving, pleasant, merciful and friendly.

In other words, the world became alive again. With the light given to him by Allah, he was able to revive his companions and give them new life. Allah says in Holy Qur'an.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ۝

O ye who believe! Respond to Allah, and the Messenger when he calls you that he may give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that He it is unto Whom you shall be gathered.

Sahaba respond with utmost respect and love of the Holy Prophet[saw]

The companions were not only drawn to him but he kept them attracted and connected forever as the sun's pull keeps the planets circling around it. They loved him and treated each other with kindness and mercy.

As we know the Muslims suffered losses in the battle of Uhud. One Saad bin Rabee was buried among about 70 dead Muslim bodies. He was still barely alive. The Holy Prophet[saw] was remembering all the dead companions. He asked the *Sahaba* to go find out what happened to Sa'd bin Rabee. The *Sahaba* tried but could not find him. The Holy Prophet[saw] asked them to go back and announce, "Allah's *Rasool*[saw] is calling for you". On hearing this there was some movement among dead bodies and a weak hand came out it was Saad bin Rabee. The *Sahaba* ran up to him and said that the Holy Prophet[saw] has sent his *Salaam* to him. Sa'd bin Rabee responded that he is seriously injured and unlikely to survive. He sent his *Salaam* to the Holy Prophet[saw] and prayed that the Holy Prophet[saw] may be the most successful amongst all the Prophets. He asked them to give his message to his people that he fulfilled his pledge and protected the Holy Prophet[saw] till his last breath, now he hands over this trust to them and make sure you safeguard it till your last breath.

Muslims follow in footsteps of the Holy Prophet[saw] and establish an Ummah based on kindness, love and mercy.

They would not let anger and hatred overpower them. Hadhrat Ali was in war and finally got his opponent under control and was about to kill him when the enemy spit on Hadhrat Ali's[ra] face. At this time Hadhrat Ali[ra] let him go. He explained that I was fighting for the cause of Allah. As soon as he was spit at, personal anger overcame him and he did

not want to hurt anyone for that.

Sahaba become stars

If the Holy Prophet was like a sun the companions revived through him became shining stars and illuminated the world.

أصحابي كالنجوم فبأيهم اقتديتم اهتديتم

My Companions are like the guiding stars; whomsoever you follow, you will be led to the right path.

Muslims forgetting the lessons of Mercy and turning into a dead nation

Unfortunately, their light started fading away. The sun started becoming wrapped up. The stars became obscure. The signs of life slowly started to disappear. The pulse of humanity became feeble.

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۝ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انكَدَرَتْ ۝ 81:2-3

When the sun is wrapped up, and when the stars are obscured.

Imagine what happens to the planets and if they lose the pull of the Sun's attraction.

They forgot the lessons learned from the Holy Prophet[saw]. They were supposed to be merciful and be life giving. They turned into violent and vicious characters. Instead of giving life, they started distributing death. Look at Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and so on. There is violence and bloodshed. Muslims are taking lives of not only non-Muslim but also their Muslims brothers themselves. Pakistan is not far behind. They are excelling in murder disregard of basic values of tolerance, kindness, mercy, and religious freedom. They are now wandering aimlessly and heading towards death and destruction themselves.

Some Muslims relive the lesson of Mercy for mankind

Fortunately Allah did not forget his people. The Promised Messiah[as] captured the light of the Holy Prophet[saw] to the fullest and he started shining like a full moon. The life giving qualities became alive again in the person of the Promised Messiah[as] and his companions. Same acts of kindness, mercy, love, and tolerance were practiced once again. The companions of the Promised Messiah[as] adapted the same characters and starting shining like the stars in the same way the stars of the Holy Prophet[saw] shined. The Promised Messiah[as] says "*sahaba ko mila jis nain mujh to paya*" One who found me will be with and like the *Sahaba* of the Holy Prophet[saw].

Some Muslims have a distorted understanding of the mercy and kindness of the Holy Prophet[saw].

There are numerous individuals' examples of mercy among the companions and followers of the Promised Messiah[as]. Many have given their lives serving humanity. Dr. Mannan *Shaheed*, Dr. Mahdi Ali *Saheed*. These and many others are individuals who captured the light of *Rahmatullil Alameen.*

By being merciful we can become stars and illuminate the world. Every act of mercy and charity starts from home.

My brothers and sisters, the Muslim world is dying again. All the values, which are a hallmark of Islamic society, are fast vanishing. The morals, the honesty, the kindness, the mercy, the tolerance is nowhere to be found. Allah gave life to the world through the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Holy Prophet[saw] in turn gave life to his companions and followers to come for a long time. We need to capture this light and start shining like the stars. We have to be merciful and kind. All acts of goodness start from home. Let us look around. These are the brothers and sisters who deserve our mercy and kindness. Only, if we are merciful to our family, and community can we claim to establish the mercy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] in the world. Here are the action items. I and we all pledge to be kind and merciful to others. This will be tested when we walk outside this marquee, when go to the dining area, when we start to drive out of the *Jalsa gah,* when we go to pick up our wives, when our wives may be few minutes late. We will be tested in treating our children; we will be tested in treating our parents, our relatives, poor and deserving souls. We will be tested as to how we behave with daughters in our match making process. We have been asked by the Holy Prophet[saw] himself to follow his footsteps and be like him. Allah has given us a role model.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۝

Verily you have in the Prophet

of Allah an excellent model, for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much.

We need to adopt his ways and be like him. Please think for a moment are we following his model when we listen to our *Khalifa*, are we following his model when we treat our parents, are we following his model when we treat our wives, are we following his model when we interact with our community members, are we following his model and forgive those who may have mistreated us, are we following his model and control our anger, are we humble, are we kind, are we gracious, are we forgiving, do we pray for others. One way to remind ourselves is to make sure every time we say Salam, we really mean it. We mean peace and mercy. In fact, we need to say *Salaam* more often rather than hello or hi. The Holy Prophet[saw] emphasized on this and the companions sometimes used to go to the market just to say *Salaam* to others.

The world has been trying to disgrace the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. By following his example we need to become little Muhammads and spread around in the world. What do we have to offer to this world? Do we have unlimited wealth, do we have educational institutions, do we have industry, do we have technology? The only thing we can offer them is the model of Muhammad[saw], the morals of Muhammad[saw], and the mercy of Muhammad[saw]. Allah has promised two paradises for us. By being like him we can create paradise in our homes, communities, countries and the world. We launched "I love Muhammad[saw] campaign" Let us not stop there let us start a "Be like Muhammad[saw] campaign for ourselves" Some do not want us to call ourselves Muslims. Let us be like Muhammad[saw] and frustrate their plans.

By illuminating the world we can give it life again

The Holy Prophet[saw] spent his life for the benefit of mankind. He left guidance, teaching and prayers for all of us. He passed away a long time ago but his light is still shining. We are heirs of *Rahmatullil Alameen.* We are the recipients of his life giving light. We have been given this trust to carry the message of the Holy Prophet[saw], the mission of the Holy Prophet[saw] the *Rehmat* of the Holy Prophet[saw] to the ends of the earth. It is the mercy of the Holy Prophet, which is the great unifying theory of the universe. Let us be deserving of being a recipient of this light and revive the world. Let us complete the real circle of life once again. Let us make sure that Muhammad[saw] will be happy to call us his *Ummat.*

Let us pray that none of our actions leads to any disgrace of the Holy Prophet[saw] and we may be instrumental in establishing the supremacy of our beloved Prophet. We live in a world where the Prophet is disgraced but I hope we leave a world behind who remembers him with respect and recognizes his kind merciful character.

I will end with a message from the Holy Prophet[saw]

God made the lives, property and the honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all times. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker.

O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal.

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HADITH

Hadhrat 'Umar bin Al-Khattab[ra] relates that a man came to the Messenger[saw] of Allah and asked him to give him something. The Holy Prophet[saw] said: "I do not have anything with me. However, you can acquire the thing you desire on my behalf on loan and when I receive some goods I will pay the debt. Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] relates that he said: 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! You have already given to him. Allah did not put responsibility upon your shoulders beyond your capacity.' The Holy Prophet[saw] disliked Hadhrat 'Umar's[ra] words. One of the *Ansar* said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! Spend (as you wish) and do not fear any lessening from the owner of the Throne (Allah).' The Messenger[saw] of Allah smiled, and happiness was apparent from his face due to hearing what the *Ansar* said. Then he[sa] said, 'I have been commanded to (do) the same.' "

(Shama'il Tirmidhi)

CONQUERING HEARTS THROUGH LOVE – INSPIRING EXAMPLES FROM OUR KHULAFA

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فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۖ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْاَمْرِ ۚ فَاِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِيْنَ ۝

What if my father died while I was young? Every young child's mind registers that question at some stage. That question goes through a young person's mind. And what if I died while my children were still young. Every father at some stage thinks about that question. And that is what drives life insurance policy sales, it's that insecurity, that's the simple business model. Today I'm not going to go forward into the *Halal* and *Haram* of buying insurance policies, that's a whole different discussion. I'm want to go backward, 1400 hundred years back, when a father actually died without buying a life insurance policy for his son.

Hadhrat Abu Huraira[ra] lost his father when he was very young. And of course at that time there were no life insurance policies. An insurance agent would tell you that had his father purchased a term life insurance policy Hadhrat Abu Huraira[ra] would not be standing on the side of *Masjid -e-Nabwi* asking *Sahaba* what is the meaning of this verse that says feed the hungry. It's a very famous story, every Ahmadi Muslim knows that. Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddique[ra], Hadhrat Umar[ra] would pass by, talk to Abu Huraira and tell him this is what the verse means and pass by. And ultimately *Rasoolullah*[saw] was watching from a window and he said, 'O Abu Huraira, are you hungry?' And that was the crux of the problem.

See as fathers we worry about the financial stability and protection of our children but that's not all that a father provides. There's so much more to fatherhood. If we die, who is going to provide that love to our children? Ever thought about that? Will your insurance company have that kind of a coverage? What will happen to the emotional needs of your children? Is there any relative that you would rather have your children follow for their spiritual needs. Is there anyone? That is where the need lies. Khalifatul Masih provides the love of a mother and the protection of a father. This spiritual insurance starts where your physical life insurance ends. The benefits of this insurance actually kick in when our physical insurances cannot cover us any more.

And today I'm going to narrate a few incidences of the life of *Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat* as to how they have conquered the hearts. Today, the *Khilafat* that the larger Muslim world knows about is busy conquering territories while *Khalifatul Masih* is busy conquering hearts. What do I mean by that?

Chaudhry Hakim Din Sahib came to Khalifatul Masih I[ra] at 11pm at night. His wife was in labor, it was their first child and it was a difficult delivery. So he came argued with the night watchman, he said I am not waking Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra]. But Khalifatul Masih I[ra] heard the whole thing and came out and spoke to Chaudhry Sahib. He said I am giving you a date, a *Khajoor*, He prayed on it. He said please give it to your wife. Come back and tell me what happens. The man shows up in the morning, he's beaming, says *Jazakamullah,* I gave her the date, Allah Ta'ala blessed us with a beautiful daughter. Khalifatul Masih I[ra] looked at him and said after the birth of that baby both of you must have gone to sleep peacefully. He said the man did not feel appropriate to come back at 3 or 4 o'clock buy Khalifatul Masih stayed up all night, praying for that woman so that her suffering was eased, so her pain was eased. When our health insurance ends the benefit, the stage where the benefit ends, go back check your policy, will your health insurance policy have such a privilege will somebody will pray for our families.

Munir Ahmad Bani Sahib narrates another beautiful story. He says when we were three young brothers in Qadian, we wanted a memento, we wanted a *tabarruk*, we wanted a keepsake and we went to Umme Tahir and said can Khalifatul Masih II[ra] give us a *tabarruk*? Hadhrat Umme Tahir said go back, go inside *Qasre Khilafat*, Hazoor is in there. These three brothers went inside and he says Khalifatul Masih II[ra] was lying on concrete floor reading a book. He looks at these three children and says why are you here. He's delighted to see these kids, he's smiling. They said Hazoor we want a memento from you. Hazoor gets up, goes to the refrigerator, brings out three apples and gives one apple to each of the boys, lies back on the concrete floor and starts reading the book again. A few moments later, Khalifa Sani[ra] looks at these boys and asks why are you still sitting here? And they very innocently say, Hazoor we are waiting for the *tabarruk*, for the memento. Hazoor says, didn't I give you an apple each? They said, no we are looking for a keepsake something which we can keep with ourselves. Hazoor was not angry. He got up again and went inside and brought three handkerchiefs. He gave one handkerchief to each boy and said, are you happy now and they left. Munir Bani Sahib says in 1946 as India and Pakistan were going through a bloody war, their house was set ablaze and those three mementos were lost in that house. The home-owner insurance policy did not cover that. But he says to this date, when he is narrating the story, the taste, the flavor of those apples is with us. See, when houses burn down, insurance policies can rebuild the homes but they cannot give the flavor of that apple back to our children.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh]: Waqiuz Zaman Sahib narrates that he was in TI College, Qadian and he came from a very different background and one day he did something very belligerent in the class. The teacher took him to the Principal who was Mirza Nasir Ahmad at that time and after hearing both sides, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] to-be could not pardon that child. He had done something horrible so he gave him a punishment. He said you have to either pay five rupee fine or you will have to get five strikes of a cane on your palm. Those of us who are from the Indian Sub-continent exactly know what we are talking about. So Waqiuz Zaman Sahib asked which one of them is the real punishment out of the two. Mirza Nasir Ahmad said the fine is the real punishment of course. It's for those who can't pay the fine, it's the caning. There is a date set to pay the fine. The day before the deadline, Hazoor comes to Waqiuz-Zaman sahib and asks, have you paid the fine and he sheepishly says that my Money Order from home hasn't come yet. Five rupees was a big deal, it was one month's worth lunch money, it's like $100 today. He says Mirza Nasir Ahmad looked down, put a hand in his pocket, pulled out a five rupee bill to me and said, go pay the bill or there's no way I'm going to bail you out tomorrow.

Khalifatul Masih has an administrative job, he has to make sure that certain policies and principles are followed. Love does not mean we spoil our children, but when we get in hot water, it is still the love of Khalifatul Masih that bails us out, that pulls us out.

During the Bosnian crisis, a convoy of Bosnian Muslims came to meet Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh]. During the meeting Huzoor noticed that they were beaten down, they are coming from a war torn country. What did Hazoor do first? He brought them to a dinner, he didn't give them a lecture, he didn't give them a commentary, he gave them food. Because Abu Hurairas were hungry. After that he took them to his office, met with them, he gave them love. After that he made sure that everyone of them got an envelope with some cash. He solved their problems. And then Hazoor noticed and Ataul Mujeeb Rashid Sahib, Imam of London Mosque narrates that Hazoor noticed that it was bitter cold outside and these men were wearing summer clothing. And all of a sudden Hazoor got up and went up to his residence and everyone is perplexed where did Hazoor go. A few moments later, Hazoor comes down loaded with winter clothing in his hands. He brought all his coats, woolen clothes, everything that he could bring. He gives them and says can you please start, make sure whatever fits whoever. I want you to wear these winter clothes before you go. As these Bosnian brothers are exchanging those clothes, Hazoor disappears again and this time for relatively longer moments. And this time he comes down, his son in law is with him, his grandchildren are with him and all of them are carrying further more winter clothing. Rashid sahib says it appeared that Hazoor emptied his winter closet that day and why? Because for the next two months, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] went on to wear the same *Achkan*, the

same outer garment for the next two months. This is how you conquer hearts with love.

Some people say on the blogs, listen to this, somebody said on the blog that it is estimated that 2% people end up using the life insurance, majority are not going to use it. 100% of you are going to need a spiritual insurance policy. 98% of you actually don't need that life insurance policy that we make sure that our premiums are paid for. Why worry about the body of our children, the physical needs. Allah protected the body of the Pharaoh as well. Is that good enough? Isn't that what is narrated in Holy Qur'an, the Pharaoh said, save my body. But some will come and tell you, this is not love this is dictatorship, this is a cult. On June 6 in Germany Hazoor answered that question. 'Which dictator establishes a personal connection with his people? Khalifa-e-Ahmadiyyat is trying to establish a personal relationship with people of all nations, who are spread all across the globe. Just within 12 months, Khalifatul Masih V[aba] travels from England to Vancouver to Los Angeles. Then he travels to Australia and to New Zealand. And then he travels to Japan and Singapore. Unthinkable. In addition to thousands of miles that he travels in UK and Europe. Any father here who's done that? Is that how a dictator looks? And when CNN asked him in the US why are you here? Because their understanding is that Muslim leaders only come to the US when they have an ask. Hazoor said I'm here to see my family, I'm here to see my people. This is to the extent to which Khalifatul Masih is going to win over the hearts and then get this 'Which worldly leader is there who then prays for those who are ill? Which worldly leader is there who is worried about the matrimonial affairs of the daughters of his group. And then he prays for them. The love of Khalifatul Masih does not however stop when daughters are married and it continues. Last year in Germany, one of the members of Hazoor's Qafila who is an introvert, not a very expressive person, by his own admission, was with Hazoor and of course these members they travel with Hazoor, they are away from home for a long time and Hazoor looks at him and says send text to your wife. This man is shocked that Khalifatul Masih is saying, he can't refuse and Hazoor gives him the script as well. Hazoor says send a text to you wife and say 'I miss you'. The man sends a text 'I miss you'. A few moments later, a text comes back from his wife saying '*Jazakallah*, we miss you too'. And he says a few more moments go by and the wife sends another text 'did Hazoor tell you to send that text?' This is the taste, the uniqueness, the fragrance that love of Khalifatul Masih, that through radio waves, through electromagnetic waves, our wives can sense the difference. Our children can sense the difference that this was something different. This love is real, this is different. There are still a handful of brothers who would say 'You guys are a cult'. Really? So when Abu Huraira[ra] cries for Prophet Muhammad[saw] that is devotion, and when we cry for Khalifatul Masih that is a cult. Really, cults have novel beliefs and novel practices. What is novel here? Khalifatul Masih is simply trying to epitomize, simply trying to follow the *Sunnah* of Rasulullah[saw]. He's simply hunting down the Abu Hurairas out there and fulfilling their needs of love. Yes I understand grapes are sour. Yes I understand they don't have such a *Khilafat*. But for God's sake, don't make stuff up. Cults reprimand and even kill people who leave them. And Khalifatul Masih is praying for the persecutors. This is the *Khilafat* that we are talking about, my brothers and sisters and yes, the grapes are sour.

Khalifatul Masih II[ra] says 'Is there any difference between you and those who have turned their face away from *Khilafat*, who are disobedient to this *Khilafat*? There is no difference. But yes there is a huge difference. For you there is a person who cares for you, he loves you, he understands your pain and suffering. He makes your suffering his own and he then begs prayers from Allah on your behalf but they don't have such a person. Hazoor says, you have not lost an iota out of your freedom. But someone who was free, just like you, has now been loaded with responsibilities.

What are those responsibilities? Khalifatul Masih V[aba] then goes on to describe that on June 6. He says 'Before sleeping at night, there is no country of the world that I do not visit in my imagination and no Ahmadi for whom I don't pray while sleeping and while awake. I'm not doing any favors because this is my duty. And May Allah enable me to ever increase in assuming my responsibilities. The only reason I've said is to make it clear that there can be no comparison between *Khilafat* and other worldly secular leaders. That is the duty and responsibility of

Khalifatul Masih but do we also have a duty. Is this insurance free? Is there no premium that we must pay? Does that make sense? Someone may say I'm talking about money, no. Khalifatul Masih does not need our *Chanda* or our *Zakat*. We need that. That Is not the premium. Get it out of your head. The Holy Qur'an says, 'Never shall you attain righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love'.

Never for a second think that our *Chanda* or our *Zakat* is our premium. No it's not. The premium is also mentioned in the Holy Quran 'The reward of goodness is nothing but goodness.' When Khalifatul Masih conquers our heart with love, the least we can do is love him back. The least we can do is to turn our face towards him, the least we can do is to align our compass with his compass. And that is the community that Khalifatul Masih is trying to establish. How does that community look? In 2005, when Hazoor went to Uganda, Hazoor tells us. He says as Hazoor was getting in the car, and the Qafila was leaving, there was a woman who was carrying a two-year -old baby, an African woman, she was running along the car. She was getting pushed, she was getting shoved, but she was running. She wanted her son, a two-year-old baby; she wanted him to look at Khalifatul Masih. She wanted to make sure that the face of her son was towards Khalifatul Masih but the son was looking the other way. This woman kept on running and Hazoor says ultimately the child turned the face around, he smiled, he waved his hand to Hazoor and that is when the mother was resting. Hazoor says there is no danger to *Khilafat* as long as such mothers are born who raise these children that are devoted to *Khilafat*.

So what is my ask? My ask is very simple. Pay your premium. This spiritual insurance is not free. What happens when you don't pay a premium for your car insurance, your health insurance, your life insurance? It lapses, it expires. You die and the insurance company is going to say sorry, your policy had been expired. What is the premium? It is very simple. One action item.

Children: listen to the sermons of the Khalifatul Masih. In this day and age, I humbly believe that if someone is not, after so many repeated reminders, that is a form of arrogance. That is arrogance. We think we are better than that. And why should we listen to the Friday sermons. When I was a child I had the same fear. What if my father died while I was still young? And that fear became real when I was 22 years old and for a second I thought okay, now the days of being an orphan start. But what I realized and what I want to tell you today, May Allah *Ta'ala* grant a very long, healthy and productive life to your parents and may they see decades with you, but there is no force on the face of this earth that can turn an Ahmadi into an orphan. An Ahmadi child cannot, will not, never become a *Yateem* (orphan), an orphan because you will always have Khalifatul Masih. That is what I realized that day or perhaps a few months down the line when grief was settling that I am not a *Yateem*, I will never be one and so is true for you as well. So no Ahmadi can ever become an orphan. Take that insurance policy with you today. As an Ahmadi you have the best life insurance policy but listen to those sermons, pay the premium.

Parents: Listen to the sermons of Hazoor. That is the single action item I have for every one of us. Then we must live those sermons, we must make sure, we need those mothers that are turning the face of the children towards Khalifatul Masih. Nag them, entice them, give them rewards, hold back their X-box if you have to but make sure that they are aligned to Khalifatul Masih. That is how that community looks.

Fathers: conquer the hearts of your family. Be that role model at your own home. Because otherwise that is a form of hypocrisy. Hazoor said in his message today that your words should match your deeds. And start early. Your children are never to early for love. Two years is a very good age. Start at that age. Make sure that the face of our children is towards Khalifatul Masih and that will only happen when we ourselves are facing Khalifatul Masih. Not *Rooh Gardani*. We must do that. So the action item is listen to the sermons of Khalifatul Maih.

Our elders: Very humbly I suggest listen to Hazoor's sermons. But then don't give your children commentary or interpretation. Abu Huraira[ra] was not hungry for a commentary and neither are your children. They are hungry for role models. Your children, your youngsters, want to see do you actually believe in what you say. Show them that role model and listen to the Friday sermons.

Office holders: I will close

with that. Office holders, their biggest lament is that people don't listen to me. I call them, they don't pick up the phone, I email them, they don't respond. I call them for a meeting, they don't show up. No, that's not because they are bad. That is not the case. Let me read the translation of the verse I started in the beginning. Allah *Ta'ala* says to Rasulullah[saw]:

And it is by the *great* mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough *and* hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. [3:160]

That is what has happened with us today. Wherever that is happening is because people like me are hard-hearted. I need to fix myself because the trust that Khalifatul Masih has given me, and you and many of us. And once we become tender hearted we will realize that there are lots of Abu Hurairas[ra] in this *Jama'at.* So office holders, listen to Hazoor's Friday sermons. And as Hazoor said today, become meek servants of Allah Almighty and recognize that these people who are not coming, are not bad. They are Abu Hurairas among us, they don't need our sermons, they don't need our commentaries. They sometimes need our respect, they sometimes need our love, they sometime need a prescription refill or sometime they need a prayer for their child. They sometime need a ride to work or they sometime need a very small loan. But they don't need our sermons. And they are hoping that someone from a window will look at them and say 'O Abu Huraira! Are you hungry?' Because they are not bad, they are hungry.

Wa akhiro wa duana……

FOR MY MOTHER

Sayyarah Hikmat

I have learned patience from the trees
They weather the ice winds
Their leaves are gone, crushed and buried under the snow
They are left bare armed

But they wait for the spring to come!
When, they will get freshly clad with green robes
The flowers smile and dance all day to please us
But by eve-fall, they wither without any complaint

The onrushing waters of the river never return
The river accepts its lot
When the bird says goodbye to its nest
The singled one never weeps!

Oh Mom! Spring was here when you were here
But now when you have gone
My life is not in autumnal leaves
You found in me something to cherish, to admire and love

At times in my confusion of life
I was rude to you and spoke sharply
But you forgave my stupidities with your kind and generous heart
When I came to you wounded by words and hurt by hate!

You kissed away my bruises
You were always … of happiness to me
And, I was blessed with a certain sense of resilience
You were an umbrella in the Sun

A house in the rain
With your soul-probing wisdom and serenely you gave me guidance and assurance!
My mind was formed by the radiance of your love
When you went away, I lost my power

I was torn like a helpless child
For a certain time, there was a vacuum!
But, slowly my anguished heart found comfort in your memories!
I feel connected to you by some wireless!

I can feel your presence, wherever I go
I am never alone, you are on my side in my walks
You are in my dreams with messages of tenderness and care!
In my thoughts with precepts of courage and strength.

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ESTABLISHING A LIVING FAITH IN GOD

Maulana Talha Ali

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ
يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝٣١
قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ
اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ
فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ
رَبِّهٖٓ اَحَدًا ۝١١٠

The topic of my speech today is establishing a living faith, a living relationship with Allah the Almighty. I want to start my speech with a question. Does it ever feel like there is something missing in your life? You just landed a new job, bought a new house, you are driving around in your brand new Mercedes ..... and while you are driving back from your esteemed job to your beautiful home you look around yourself, and in that moment of silence, you feel it – that same feeling that you have known so well, so long, that vacuum inside of you, a hole in your heart which just never seems to get filled no matter how much happiness you pour into it???

My dear Brothers: If I have just described your innermost feelings don't be scared. You are not alone. God put this hole, this vacuum in all of us. Allah *Ta'ala* says in the *Surah Al-A'raf,* Chapter 7 v. 173 of the Holy Qur'an that we engrained our stamp on the souls of the children of Adam and called them to witness that الست بربكم Am I not your Lord? And they replied قالوا بلى Yes we do bear witness. The Promised Messiah[as] explains this in a beautiful couplet:

تو نے خود روحوں پہ اپنے ہا تھ سے چھڑکا نمک
اس سے ہے شورِ محبت عاشقانِ زار کا

That this clamor of those who are stricken with your love is because You yourself sprinkled salt unto their souls.

My dear friends: People argue that it is impossible to find God. They say having a relationship with Allah the Almighty is only for the prophets and the saints. They say God doesn't talk so how can you have a relationship with Him? But my dear brothers, the God which is presented to us by the Holy Prophet[saw] and then by his true and ardent servant the Promised Messiah[as] is a living God who not only speaks but wants to speak with every single of His servants. As I mentioned earlier, it is a God who has himself put the seed of His love in every man's heart. If he didn't want to have a relationship with His creation why would he bother to put this unquenching desire for \His communion in every man's heart? Is He really that cruel to give us the thirst of His love but no water to quench this thirst? NO !!

Our Lord is the one who proclaims in the Holy Qur'an that:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And *as for* those who strive in Our Path — We will surely guide them in Our ways. We will show them the path to our communion. We will take them to the spring of water which will quench their thirst. Our Lord is the one who proclaims that O my servants if you take one step towards me I will take two steps towards you. If you come towards me walking I will come towards you running. I will forgive all of your sins even if they are the size of this Universe. But come towards me, take the first step, strive in my way, endeavor to find me, take a leap of faith to have a relationship with Me and you will find Me running towards you to take you in my lap with love and affection.

My dear brothers: They say it is impossible to become a *Waliullah*, a Saint, a friend of God, but Allah the Almighty mentions in His Holy Book that:

اَللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۙ يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ؕ

That Allah is the friend of those who believe: he brings them out of every kind of darkness into light. They say it is impossible to be a *wali* of Allah, Allah says I am the *wali* of every believer. One of the verses of the Holy Qur'an which I recited in the beginning of my speech is the last verse of *Surah Al-Kahf,* Chapter

18 v. 111 of the Holy Quran. Allah *Ta'ala* mentions in that verse that O Prophet Muhammad[saw]: Say, 'I am only a man like yourselves; *but* I have received the revelation that your God is only One God. So let him who hopes to meet his Lord do good deeds, and let him join no one in the worship of his Lord.'

This verse tells us through the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] that he was also a man just like us. What differentiated him from other men was that he had a living relationship with Allah. He received revelations from Allah. And then the verse immediately turns our attention that, O the followers of Muhammad[saw] if you also want to meet your Lord then all you have to do is believe in Allah and do good deeds.

My dear Brothers: Imagine a person who lost his camel, along with food and water, in a waterless desert. He looked for his camel without luck and being stricken with hunger and thirst falls asleep waiting for death to overtake him. When he gets up he sees his camel along with the food and water standing in front of him. Can you imagine his happiness? Allah says that I am happier at the repentance of my servant then the person who found his lost camel.

[*Muslim, Kitab al-Tauba*]

Respected Audience: Even though Allah *Ta'ala* has promised us that انّي قريبthat I am near, and that if you strive in my cause I will guide you to my paths but we must still understand and realize how to strive in the cause of Allah. Allah *Ta'ala* will indeed come running towards us if we but only walk towards him but we must still know how to walk towards Allah. It is impossible to evaluate various aspects of developing relationship with Allah in the limited time allotted to me but I would just like to focus on a few key, fundamental and practical aspects of this topic. First and foremost, we must have a true recognition of Allah. In Islamic terminology this is referred to as معرفتِ الٰہیor true understanding of Allah. In a *Hadithe Qudsi* it is mentioned that

قال اللہ انا عند الظنّ عبدي

That Allah *Ta'ala* has said said that I am to my servant as he thinks of me. Let me narrate a famous story to illustrate this point. Hadhrat Maulvi Muhammad Ilyas Khan Sahib[ra] was a companion of the Promised Messiah[as]. Once he was asked in a large gathering by a great scholar of his area that did he not find any scholar or saint in his province that he had to travel to Punjab to do *Bai'at* of a *Punjabi Maulvi.* His answer is worth writing in gold. He replied that the thing is that I had lost my God. I went to every scholar of every sect within Islam and begged them that I have lost my God please help me find him. They all replied that God used to talk but he hasn't spoken since the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. So, I made my mind that there is no God. He is just a myth, a philosophy, a child's tale to keep us occupied. If he was real then his attributes should be real, should be everlasting. I was living my life in this sorry state that a loving hand held me from my shoulder and asked Muhammd Ilyas what is wrong? I said I have lost my God. I have lost my beloved. I can't find him. That hand was the hand of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] and he said come Muhammad Ilyas I will take you to your Lord. So, I followed him. And today I swear by Allah in whose hand is my life that the God of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] speaks to me as well. Is there anyone in this gathering who can also claim the same? But how could they? They had made their God dumb and mute hence Allah also treated them the same way. They had no recognition of Allah. They had gotten the very first step wrong and hence their entire building was crooked.

Secondly, we must love Allah with all of our heart and with all of our being. Love is the foundation of any sound relationship and one must love his Lord more than anything else in the world to have a living relationship with Allah. But the question is how do we develop this love for Allah. The Promised Messiah[as] has explained this in a very beautiful manner. He explains that one can love someone for one of the two reasons. Either because of their beauty, or because of their benevolence and kindness. Allah the Almighty has both of these things – beauty and benevolence, in their highest form. His benevolence is self-apparent. One only needs to think of everything which Allah has given to him without asking, without deserving and he would realize that His benevolence covers all.

As for His beauty the Promised Messiah[aa] states commenting on the verse:

اَللّٰهُ نُوْرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth.

Every light that is visible on the heights or in the valleys, whether in souls or in bodies, whether personal or impersonal, whether apparent or hidden, whether in the mind or outside it, is a bounty of His Grace."

(Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya pp.191-192. footnote, Roohani Khazaain Vol: 1)

The Promised Messiah[as] states in a poem that

چشم مست ہر حسیں ہر دم دکھاتی ہے تجھے

ہاتھ ہے تیری طرف ہر گیسوئے خمدار کا

The drunken eye of every beauty reveals Thee each instant;
To Thee points the hand of every curling lock.

Hence, a very simple but effective way of developing a living relationship with Allah is to ponder on His beauty and benevolence for only a few minutes a day. Maybe we can sit for 10 minutes after *Isha Salaat*, or before going to sleep and just think about His beauty and how it has manifested itself in His creation, and the benevolence of Allah and His mercy which we receive every single day of our life.

My dear Brothers: The reason man has difficulties developing a relationship with God is because Allah the Almighty is the purest of pure, the most holy, the most sublime. How can an impure man have a relationship with God? How can the physical have a relationship with the metaphysical, the sublime, the most transcendent of all beings? For us to develop a relationship with Allah we most acquire his characteristics. Allah *Ta'ala* says in the Holy Qur'an:

صِبْغَةَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ صِبْغَةً ۖ وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ عٰبِدُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۹﴾

That dye yourself in the color of Allah. And what color can be better than the color of Allah. The entire concept of developing a relationship with Allah revolves around this simple principal. The rest is just the details. But to accept the color of Allah one must let go of his own color, his own desires, and his own self. One must bring about a death upon himself and upon this death depends our rebirth, our eternal life, our relationship with Allah the Almighty. Prophet Jesus[as] has said no one can enter the kingdom of heaven until he is reborn in spirit.

This death and rebirth is not a philosophical subject but another name for the Islamic concept of توبہ. The Promised Messiah[as] has written that the true repentance demands a death from us. But what is true repentance? The Promised Messiah[as] explains that the true repentance is a moment of resolve. It is a moment when one makes a firm resolve that I will not commit this sin even if I am put in fire. It is this singular moment which changes the life of a human being and in that moment he transforms from a material being into a spiritual and sublime being.

Hadhrat Mian Muhammad Din Sahib[ra] was a companion of the Promised Messiah[as]. He mentions that when I was a young man I had become an atheist. Someone gave me *Barahine Ahmadiyya* to read. I started reading the book and when I reached the point where the Promised Messiah[as] mentions proofs about the existence of God, it was as if I just woke up from a long sleep. Or as if I was dead and someone just blew life into me. It was a moment of *Tauba* for me, a moment of resolve. He says that I got up in the middle of the night and started washing my clothes. Then I performed a bath with extremely cold water in the middle of the night and fell in prostration. I spent the entire night crying and praying to Allah. He says I was a young, unmarried man who was involved in all sorts of vanities and luxuries.

But that one moment of resolve changed my life. I was not the same Muhammad Din in the morning who went to bed at night.

Respected Audience: Allah *Ta'ala* mentions in the Holy Qur'an that he is the friend of the believers, He takes them out of every sort of darkness into lights. He does that by the means of angels who put it into the heart of every individual to lean towards righteousness instead of darkness. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] in his speech ملائکۃ اللہ has outlined a very easy and practical way to develop a relationship with angels and hence with Allah. One of those ways is to read such books which were revealed by angels, or were written under divine guidance. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] mentions that the entire time a person is reading such a book angels of Allah are descending upon such a person. Hence, the reading of the Holy Qur'an and the books of the Promised Messiah[as] on regular basis is another great way to develop a relationship with Allah. I just narrated the incident of Mian Muhammad Din Sahib[ra]. His true repentance,

his moment of resolve was not a mere coincidence but the effect of the angels which descended upon his pure heart upon reading the book of the Promised Messiah[as].

Respected Audience: In the verse of the Holy Qur'an which I recited in the beginning of my speech Allah *Ta'ala* says through the Holy Prophet[asw] that Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me: *then* will Allah love you and forgive you your faults. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (*Surah Ale Imran* 3:32)

It is the love of the Holy Prophet[saw] which can truly make one the beloved of God. The greatest example of this love and the fulfillment of this promise of Allah the Almighty can be seen in the life of the Promised Messiah[as]. The Promised Messiah[as] was only able to reach the high station through his love for the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Promised Messiah[as] himself discusses that it was shown to him in a vision that this grand status, this close and living relationship with Allah has been granted to him only because:

هذا رجل يحب رسول الله

That this man is the true lover of the Holy Prophet[saw]. My dear brothers, the true love of the Holy Prophet[saw] cannot be established in our heart unless we understand the beauty and benevolence of the Holy Prophet[saw]. And for that we must read about the beautiful life of the Holy Prophet[saw] and ponder over his favors upon us. When we will fully realize the beauty of the Holy Prophet[saw] then *Durood* will flow out of our tongues, NO, then *Durood* will flow out of our hearts. And that *Durood* will become the light which angels will pour forth upon our hearts just like in the case of the Promised Messiah[as] when the angels poured *NUR* unto his house saying:

هذا بما صليت على محمد

That this is the same *Durood* which you sent on the Holy Prophet[saw].

My dear brothers: The Promised Messiah[as] states that whatever grand status I have received I have received it through invoking blessings on the Holy Prophet[saw] in abundance. He states that:

It is my personal experience that to obey the Holy Prophet[saw] with a sincere heart and to love him, ultimately makes a person beloved of God.

[Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza-'in, Vol. 22, pp. 67

The bottom line, my brothers, is that كل بركة من محمد that all blessings are through the Holy Prophet Muhammd[saw].

Respected Audience: I started my speech with a question. Now, I want to raise another question to end my speech. We, as Ahmadis, claim that we want to bring the world to the fold of Ahmadiyyat. We claim to be the saviors of the world. We claim, that we are the patrons of a New, and peaceful, World Order which will save the world from self-destruction. My question, my dear brothers and sisters, is that what do we have to offer this society. What do we have which they don't have. Are we better behaved than the society we live in? Are we more organized than the society we live in? Are we better accomplished than the society we live in? Do you see a stark (in a good way) difference when you enter our mosque as opposed to a church or a government building? Is our dealing with people better than the society we live in? What do we have to offer a society which already has streams of milk and honey; which already has abundance of wealth and progress?

The answer is simple : We only have one thing to offer the world. NO, the world is only looking for one thing. The world has lost its God !! The world is full of many Muhammad Ilyas looking for their God

My dear Brothers: Hadhrat Maulvi Burhanud Din Jehlami[ra] used to say that we were losers before we found the Promised Messiah[as]. Then, we found the Promised Messiah[as] and he showed us a living God and we were beaten for that. He himself was beaten in the marketplace, and to add insult to injury, animal feces were put in his mouth. He says we were persecuted for the sake of Allah but if we haven't found him then

فیر تے اسی چڈووے چڈو ہی رہے۔

Then we are still the same losers. My dear friends: The question is simple and answer even simpler. Have we ourselves found the God we are calling the world towards? If the answer is no then -

فیر تے اسی چڈووے چڈو ہی رہے۔

کیا زندگی کا ذوق اگر وہ نہیں ملا

لعنت ہے ایسے جینے پر گر اس سے ہیں جدا

اللهم انّي اسئلك حبك و حب ....

GOD IS NEAR - THE INSPIRING POWER OF PRAYER

Maulana Noman Rana

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

And when My servants ask you about Me, say: 'I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.'

The verse that has been recited before you is from *Surah Baqarah*, 2nd Chapter of the Holy Qur'an, verse number 187.

In this verse of the Holy Qur'an, God is mentioning the relationship between God and man, answering the question, 'Where is God?' and He replies by saying, I am near and as a sign of His nearness, He says, I answer the prayer of one who prays to Me. The word '*Ibaadi*'-'My Servant' applies to those, as mentioned in the verse, who are willing to obey all His commandments and those who believe in Him, and in return, God says, I will accept their prayers.

One way of having our prayers accepted is to ensure that our actions are according to God's commandments. When a father asks his son to do a few chores around the house, clean his room, take out the garbage, help with the dishes, mow the lawn, and when the son does all this, the father is happy and then if the son would ask his father for something, it is more likely, keeping his son out of harms way, the father will give it to him. This is the relation between God and man, a relationship of a Master and His servant.

In this quest of building a relationship with God, throughout the Holy Qur'an and the *Ahadith,* which are the narrations of the Holy Prophet[saw], we find a number of ways of connecting with our Creator, we find many avenues that lead to our Living and Loving God.

In one of the *Ahadith*, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] says: 'Our God descends to the nearest heavens, when one third of the night remains, He says, who is the one who calls me and I will answer to his call. Who is the one who will ask me for something and I will grant it for him, who will ask me for forgiveness and I will forgive him?

(*Tirmadhi*)

A prayer is a wonderful thing, a way of God showing miracles for His servants. This was the case during the life of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Promised Messiah[as] has sketched that picture with the following words in his book, *Barakatud Dua*: "Are you aware what was the wonderful event that happened in the deserts of Arabia, that hundreds of thousands of the dead came alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine color, and the blind began to see, and the tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine insights, and such a revolution took place in the world which no eye had seen and no ear had heard before? It was the prayers during dark nights of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as had appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one, Muhammad[saw]."

This was the phenomenon that took place in result of prayer. Now, unfortunately, some people have jumped to the conclusion that God used to listen to His people, He used to talk to His servants but now He does not listen or speak and, God forbid, even some of His attributes have come to an end. How unfortunate!

The Qur'an, *Ahadith* and the books of history are filled with stories of God's miracles, we have to think about the everyday miracles and wonders that fill our lives, such as the prayer that God will help us find our car keys? Or when we are stuck in traffic and are running late for our appointment? What about those moments when God helps us through pulling those all-nighters before the 9

o'clock exam? Or the *Durood Sharif* which helps us land a job that we always wanted?

Once, a member of the *Jama'at*, Mian Muhammad Ibrahim Sahib narrates an incident and it is recorded in *Al-Fazl*. He says, in the early 70s, he was sent to the United States of America as a Missionary. He was stationed in Dayton and was residing there, since he did not know how to cook, he said he was getting by on eating biscuits, but with time he started getting sick, ended up in a hospital, even then he was not able to get any better. Doctors had announced him as uncurable and one day he heard some doctors saying that he won't last until the end of the week. Upon hearing this, he said I started praying and said to God All-Mighty, 'I am yours, you can call me whenever you want, but here I am, in a foreign land, I do not know anyone, if you can delay this, it will be a great blessing from you.' The next morning, doctors found him in a very energetic state and he requested leave from the hospital. He said, this is how God accepted my prayers, where I was not even supposed to last until the end of the week, there I served in the United States of America for more than 10 years.

As the Holy Qura'n says:

بِهٖ نَفْسُهٗ ۚ وَنَحْنُ اَقْرَبُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيْدِ ۝

'And We are nearer to him than *even his* jugular vein.' (50:17)

The Promised Messiah[as] came to revive Islam with this teaching that our God is a living God and he says in *Al-Wasiyyat:* 'Our God is the One who is alive today as much as He ever was. Likewise, He speaks today as He did in the past; He hears as He used to hear. To think that He only listens but does not speak in this age is a vain belief. Indeed, He both hears and speaks. All His attributes are eternal and everlasting. None of His attributes were ever suspended nor will they ever be.'

Abdul Manan Dehlvi Sahib_writes in his book 'Ahmadi Child' and it is also recorded in *Al-Fazl*, 'I started a business, which was at a distance from my home, so I used to come home on Thursday and go back on Monday.' He says, once I came home and found my wife suffering from an ailment, and my young daughter would need someone to take care of her. I could not leave them in that state so I decided to move my family closer to where I was running my business so I would be able to take care of my wife, daughter and look after rest of my family. I looked for a place but could not find one big enough for my family but I found a place which was really small and the condition of that place was not that great either, I had no other choice so I decided to take it. One night, due to heavy rain, which resulted in water leaking through the roof, it was so bad that one leak was right above my bed and my bed was filled with water. He said, I do not know how I passed that night, only my God knew the state of my heart, I prayed the whole night that God may improve my situation. I woke up in the morning, offered my *Fajr*, as my family was preparing breakfast, there was a knock on the door, I checked and it was another Ahmadi brother from the local *Jama'at,* the first question he asked was, 'Is your accommodation ok? Are you having trouble staying here?, I asked 'Why are you asking me this question? Who sent you here?, and he repeated again, 'Is your accommodation ok? Are you having trouble staying here?, and I replied 'Yes, I am having some trouble staying here', so he said 'OK, come with me, I will help you get a better place, on a main street, where you will be much more comfortable', so he got us a place to stay at a home of another Ahmadi brother, which was much better, much more spacious, I came home and I mentioned about this good news to the family and said 'This is how God accepts the prayers of his humble servant, as soon as sun rose, He granted us with a much better place, something that we could not even imagine.'

Chaudhry Ghulam Muhammad Sahib has mentioned an incident of acceptance of prayer and it is recorded in *Al-Fazl*, he writes, when time came for my son's final exams, I prayed for his success, on the day when he was supposed to receive his results, I went out to a secluded place and prayed in the utmost humble manner and I was given the feeling of satisfaction as if my prayer was accepted. On the same day, some other students came and said they had seen the results and my son was not one of those who had passed, my son started crying and I became worried but I told my son not to worry and that everything will be fine. The next day, when the results came in, he had passed his exams and God

had granted him success like all other students. (*Al-Fazl* - International - March 1, 2002)

God says in the Holy Qur'an:

اَللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۙ يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا

Allah is the friend of those who believe: He brings them out of every *kind of* darkness into light. (2:258)

One of God's attributes is *Al-Wali.* Allah is the friend of the believers. They say, 'A friend in need, is a friend indeed', our God is that friend who will always be there for us when we need His help, watching over our shoulder, walking us through the struggles of life.

We also have to remember that God is the Creator, He is the Master, He is the All-Knowing and we are the creation, we are the servants, our God is not bound to accept all our prayers. The Promised Messiah[as] says in *Haqiqatul Wahi* "God treats His servants like friends. A friend would sometimes accept the request of his friend and would sometimes expect him to accept his will. So does God. But even when God seemingly rejects the prayer of a believer, He is very often acting in his interest"

Once, an elderly gentleman, who use to pray to God for something every single day, one day he was praying and one of his students came and sat beside him. While the elderly gentleman was praying, God revealed a message to him and the student heard it too, but the student, out of respect, did not say anything. The next day, while he was praying again, God revealed the same message again, and the student heard it as well and again he did not say anything. The same happened the third day and the student could not hold it anymore, he said 'This is the third day that I am listening to this message from God that He is saying to you that 'I will not accept your prayer', so if God has said this, then why do you keeping on praying, just let it go. The elderly gentleman replied, you have gotten worried after listening to this message from God only three times and now you are saying that I should let it go, I have been hearing this message for the last 30 years and I have never gotten worried. My responsibility is to pray and it is God's responsibility to accept the prayer, I am doing my job and He is doing His. And the next day, God revealed to him that I have accept all the prayers that you have prayed in the last 30 years.

So, as servants, mentioned by the Promised Messiah[as], our responsibility is to be at the door of God Almighty and be like that person who comes to the door to beg and does not leave until getting something. The essence is to keep hoping for the Mercy of God, never lose hope in the blessings of our Loving God, rather we experience His blessings day-in and day-out, then why lose hope? The message is that we keep on praying because if a prayer of ours is not in our benefit then God will accept it in another way which will benefit us.

These are not only stories, these are real people experiencing real miracles and wonders of God. The door of acceptance of prayer is always open for each and every one of us and it is accessible to seek help, guidance and blessings of God. My dear Ahmadi brothers! Don't you ever forget the *Hadith-e-Qudsi* in which God says, when a servant of mine advances towards me a foot, I advance towards him a yard, and when he advances towards me a yard, I advance towards him the length of his arms spread out, (...and at the end of this *Hadith*, God defines the relationship between God and His servant by saying..) When my servant...when he walks towards me, I run towards him. May Allah bless us all. *Ameen*

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Hadhrat Nu'man bin Bashir[ra] relates that his father took him to the Messenger[saw] of Allah and said: "I have gifted one of my slaves to this son of mine. The Messenger[saw] of Allah inquired, 'Have you given all your sons the same?' He said, No; whereupon the Messenger[saw] of Allah said, 'Then take back this gift.' "

One version is: The Messenger[saw] of Allah asked: "Have you done this for all your children? He answered, 'No.' He[saw] then said, 'Be mindful of your obligation to Alla-h and do justice between your children.' My father then returned and revoked his gift.' "

Another version is that the Messenger[sa] of Allah asked: "O Bashir! Do you have any other child beside this one? He answered, 'Yes.' He[sa] asked, 'Have you made a gift like this to all of them?' He said, 'No.' He[saw] said, 'Then do not make me a witness for I do not bear witness to a wrong.' "

(Bukhari kitabul hibah)

THE PASSION OF SERVING KHILAFAT

Br. Rashid Ahmad

Transcribed by Fatima Minhas, Miami, FL

My name is Rashid Ahmad American. I converted to Ahmadiyyat in 1947, and was the first American to travel to Pakistan to study in the *Jamia*. There I spent a significant amount of time learning from and serving the 2nd Khalifatul Masih[ra]. I later served as a missionary to the *Jama'at* here in America. I am 91 years of age. Before converting to Ahmadiyyat, I was a young man on the streets of Chicago, who was living a life of wheeling and dealing with a pocketful of cash, nice jewelry, fine clothing, and a pistol on my side. I thought I had it all figured out. However, due to a chain of events, I sought a higher meaning in my life. And the key to unlock this higher meaning was education. After visiting the Ahmadiyya Mosque in and on Wabash Avenue, on the south side of Chicago, I thought this a place for me to learn. I accepted Ahmadiyyat and I wanted to dedicate my life to this faith. I wrote to the 2nd *Khalifa* expressing my interest, and received the following letter. He says:

"The task is very sacred and noble indeed [meaning dedication of life], but entails very heavy responsibilities and therefore requires an honest and careful consideration. It is a step, which once taken, there is no going back upon it. At the same time, it is an uphill task, and not in the least easy. Therefore, all the pros and cons requires to be carefully weighed and kept in mind. But by offering life, one blocks the way to all material ambition and worldly pleasures, and pledge to save God to the maximum of his ability. In the face of all obstacles and difficulties, the pleasure of one who has dedicated his life is only with God and has no reason to complain here or there. If there are any hardships, and the community is unable to support him, he has no right to complain of success because he is dedicated to win the pleasure of God so he shall have no right to complain."

My Trip to Pakistan

After saving for one year, I purchased a ticket to go to Pakistan on a freighter ship for $550. It would take 32 days going from port to port, until it reached Karachi, Pakistan. When I wrote these details to the 2nd Khalifatul Masih Sani[ra], he replied that the trip was too long and I should arrive in Pakistan by the *Jalsa Salana* days in December. He suggested I come by air. I had already bought my ticket on the freighter but returned it, and the movement contributed to my $150-per-person ticket to Pakistan. The Pan-American Airline ticket was $700. It was to go from Chicago to London, England, from England to Italy and from there I would go to Damascus, Syria. But the trip to Damascus was canceled and I went to Iraq. Being a new traveler, I did not know what a visa was, and that I needed a visa to enter Iraq. Being in the airport, excited by being in a Muslim country, I decided to go into the city. I went into the city to see what was going on, and an officer arrested me and wanted to know why I was there. I told him because the plane landed there. I don't know why I would be here other than that the plane landed me here. My trip is not here, so he decided to take me into custody, and one thing that was very strange to me was that going to Pakistan, I met a lot of Pakistani people and they all had the same thought. "When you go to Lahore, give my cousin this." "When you go to Karachi, give my brother that." I had a whole number of pieces of gifts. When they questioned me about who I was and why I was there, I told them that I was American. Then one of the officers said, "He is not American, because Americans do not travel with two overcoats. He has an overcoat, and he's lucky he has another overcoat. So what he does is he sleeps in the night and uses one of the overcoats for cover."

I also had a radio, so the officer said, "This radio, with an adapter, can become a wireless set. And he has all these Parker pens, perfume. What is he doing? He sleeps in the desert, covers himself with an overcoat, and he gets up and sells these small gifts to earn more money."

So now I have no idea, it's my first trip abroad, so what do I do? So

I try to explain. They say "no". They didn't want to hear anything I had to say. They took all the luggage I had off of the plane. The plane left me there, and I don't know anything. So I went to send a telegram. I only had $50 in my pocket, and I told the man I wanted to send a telegram to Karachi. I didn't speak Arabic and he didn't speak English, so he calculated that this would cost $150. I had only $50 cash in my pocket, so I said, "Man, what's wrong with you? There isn't any telegram that's going to cost $150." He said, "I don't know what, but if you send it, it's going to cost you $150."

So I didn't send it, so I was there in limbo. I told the arresting officer that I couldn't afford to stay here. He said, "You don't need to do nothing, but whatever comes your way, just sign the paper. Sign your name, and we will cover the expense."

Now, in Karachi, they had all of the Karachi *Jama'at* waiting to see the first American coming to Pakistan. No telegram came, no whereabouts, where is Mr. Rashid? They called London, and they said "He left here, but we don't know where he is at."

So I am sitting there in Iraq. When I finally told my story to the Pan-American airlines, this particular person who I was talking to, he recognized one of the names that I used. One name I used was Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Missionary In Charge at that time. So he recognized it, "Oh, I know that man! He was here before, so you can come with me." So he took me down to the bottom of the line, to a dugout, and told the commanding officer, "I assure you that this man has no idea about entry and international spying." They were trying to make me into an Israeli spy, because in 1947 the war was going on.

When this person cleared the route, I was let to go. When I arrived in Pakistan, nobody was there. The whole *Jama'at* was there earlier, but when I arrived there, no reception at all. Two people took me by limousine to the address I was given. The address I was given had "Lateef Ahmad Tahir, opposite Boy's School." One asked me, "Where do you want to go? What street do you want to go to?" I told him I wanted to go to opposite Boys' School. They thought that was a street, so they drove around at 12 o'clock at night, and they drove and they drove. They said, "There is no such street in Pakistan named Opposite Boy's School." I was trying to convince them that there is because I have the address, and they said "No." They asked me a question, "Why have you come here?" I told them I had come here to Pakistan to go to school. They said, "Do you know this is a new country?" This was 1948. "We have no infrastructure, we don't even have schools." They came to a conclusion that I must be crazy. Leaving America, where all the schools are, and coming to Pakistan to go to a school where there is none, because it's a new country. They decided, "Okay, we have wasted enough time. This man doesn't seem to have too much sense, so let's just get rid of him."

They came up with a fancy idea to get rid of me. They had a smile on their face; I knew there was something wrong. They had decided to dump me down on the *Mirzais. Mirzai* is what they call the Ahmadi Muslims. They took me to where the *Mirzais* had their headquarters, knocked on the door. Someone came to the door and turned the lights on. What I saw was a picture of the Promised Messiah, I said "go back to your business man, this is home. They thought, "Let's go, this is a crazy man." I thought what else did I need, a picture of the Promised Messiah, Ahmadis came to the door, so grateful to see me that they brushed and shined my shoes till 12 o'clock at night. From there, I went to Lahore. In Lahore, they had made a reception for me to go to the Civil Military Gazette, a newspaper, to make a speech and this thing and that thing. I told them I didn't want to be here, I wanted to go to Rabwah. Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra], the brother of Khalifatul Masih Sani[ra], said, "If the man is so much impressed with him to go to see the master, don't detain him. Give him room to go." I left there and went to Rabwah.

At the station, Khalifatul Masih was at the station at 8 o'clock at night. They didn't have any electricity, candle lights, lanterns and these things. He asked me one question: how was my trip? I gave him short answers. He said, "Okay, then." He was walking to his quarters. I was walking side by side with him. He went in his room, and I went in his room with him. He said, "Oh, no. You don't stay here with me." Then he took me to the *Tehrik-e-Jadid* quarters where I stayed. The next morning I went to see the *Khalifa*, all dressed up, typical Punjabi *shalwar*

kameez, and I had an *Achkan*, which somebody gave me. I dressed typical Punjabi style. He looked at me and said, "Do you always wear this dress?" I said, "No Hazoor, this was given to me." He said, "Well then, let me tell you one word of advice. Do not be too quick to adapt other people's customs. For example, if a Punjabi wants to relieve himself and he's walking on the road, he just goes on the side of the road and squats down and relieves himself. But you are accustomed to do what? To go to a bathroom, because that is the American style. So if you give your style for theirs, you will be a loser." Okay.

The next morning I go to him fully dressed, and then he said, "You are old news. You came last night, people are out to meet you. So you find something to do, and you will greet the people that are coming." It was during the *Jalsa* days. So I go here and there, and nobody has anything I can do. One person decided, "Oh, I got a job for him. Send him over here." They put me in what they call "*Roti Takseem*" (distribution of bread). I think the oldest person there who was leading that line was maybe a 8-10 year old boy. So I had to work under him, learning to count '*aik, do, teen, chaar, paanch, chay, saat, aat, no, das* (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9,10)", because we had to put the bread in stacks of 10. When Khalifatul Masih heard that, he just grinned and said, "The man came last night, now he's working in *Roti Takseem*."

I became very accustomed to being with the Khalifatul Masih. I became such accustomed with him that I suggested to him, *I*, suggested to Khalifatul Masih Sani[ra] that we should start another organization. He looked at me and said, "You said what?" I said, "We should start another organization". And he said, "What will this organization do?" I said, I will become Secretary of American Students. Now, there were only two there. One person named Abdul Shukoor (Abdul Shakoor Kunzey). I will become Secretary of American Students. He said okay. So we started another organization: Rashid Ahmad, Secretary of American Students. He read in the paper that John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, was going to Germany to meet with the Russian delegation. He says to me, "This is all wrong. So write a letter."

I wrote a letter to the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles saying that, number one, you have always gone to Russia to meet with a Russian to talk about foreign affairs. The Russians never come to America; you always go there. But the impression you are giving to the third world is that America is a friend of the Russians. They always have to go to the Russian doorstep. Are they going out of fear? So you should not continue this practice.

So John Foster Dulles reads the letter, writes to me, "Rashid Ahmad, Secretary of American Students, I am very glad that you could express yourself. Now, how many students are there and what do you do?" Now I became important, right? I am Secretary of the American Students. Khalifatul Masih would come to the mosque when I was sitting there and said, "Mr. Rashid, your minister is in town. Go and meet him." My answer was always the same: "*Jee Huzoor.*" "*Jee Huzoor*" means what? Your honorable sir, I will. What does 'I will' mean? I will do it or I will die. I can't go and come back and have some dumb excuse for not doing it. I have to do it, because I said 'Jee Huzoor'. Then I go get a newspaper to find out what minister is in town. I come to find out the Secretary of State is in town. He is in Karachi staying at the Metropol Hotel. I go to *Tehrik-e-Jadid*, they give me money for a ticket, and I go there. Now my Chicago experiences have taught me what? You don't go to the hotel dressed like you are asking for a higher personality. What you do go to, you go to the workers there. They recognize you as what you are, and you recognize them as what they are. They will tell you one thing, because number one, you are one of them. So I go to the doorman of the hotel and he says the minister Dr. Bunch is here. I say, "Where is he at?" He is downstairs with his entourage having his breakfast. I go downstairs and I look and see, he is surrounded by all the Europeans and high-placed Pakistani ministers. I know not to interrupt because they will think I come to beg a meal. So I wait until he comes out.

I go to him and say, "Dr. Bunch, I am here from America. I would like to talk to you." He says to me, "Oh, you are a very long way from home." He says, "I am also a very long way from home." I say, "I want to talk." He says, "I've told you before, I don't have time for that." I say, "I'll walk with you until you get to the elevator and I'll finish my conversation." "No, no, don't you understand?" "Dr. Bunch, what should I

understand?" "You should go to these people, and they will have made arrangements for you to see me." I say, "Dr. Bunch you and I are from America. We are brothers. Why would I go to these foreigners and ask them to make arrangements for me to meet my brother?" When I begin to talk to him like that, his entourage begins to look at me like, "who is this talking to Dr. Bunch like that?" But I knew, number one, if he is going to be cooperative okay, I'll be cooperative. Now if he's going to handle me rude and rough, I know what to do with him. I'll cut him down. He can't outtalk me. Why, I made a living in the street outtalking people, so who is he? So then he began to compromise. He said, "Okay, then what's you do, you come here to see me at two o'clock and you can attend my press conference." I said, "Dr. Bunch, I'm not interested in press conferences. Take this book." I gave him the book 'Ahmadiyyat: The True Islam' and I went back and met Khalifatul Masih Sani[ra]. He said, "Okay, what happened?" I told him the whole gist of the conversation. He said, "Now we know who the man is. He wrote a book about equality, but how has he treated you? He has treated you like he was something and you somebody less. Now we know who he is." This was my activity with Khalifatul Masih.

One thing that I have learned, when you're talking to politicians, if you use the word 'I', the less conversation you will have with the politician. If you use the word 'we', he begins to listen more. Why? Because 'we' is more than 'I'. So if you're ever going to preach and incidentally I'm looking at the crowd, my whole activity from the time of my joining Islam was *Tabligh*. I love it and I do it all the time. I've been doing it since day one. *Tabligh*. You know what *Tabligh* is? Preaching. But if I look around here and what I see, I would think you don't know much about *Tabligh*. Look at your audience. This place should be so full. The parking lots should be full of people, if you've got the spirit. You got the truth. Ahmadiyyat is truth. Ahmadiyyat is light. Ahmadiyyat is guidance. But where are the preachers? We have no preachers; we have talkers. And who do they talk to? One another. And this is one incident that enlightened me.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "While Hadhrat Job[as] was bathing naked, golden locusts started to rain down. He began to collect the locusts. His Lord, the most Honoured and Glorious called him, 'O Job, Did not I give you everything and make you self-sufficient not to need what you see?' Job[as] answered, 'Indeed. By Your Honor! It is correct but there is no richness from Your Blessings or who can dispense with Your Blessings.' "

(Bukhari kitabul anbiya')

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Mubashar Ahmad Nasir, Philadelphia, PA

By the Grace of Allah *Ta'ala* our son Suleman Ahmad and his wife Shah Bano hae been blessed with a daughter, "MARYAM AMATUS SALAM," on October 9, 2014 at Philadelphia, PA USA.

She is the granddaughter of eminent Dr. Amatus Salam *marhooma*, granddaughter of Hadhrat Maulvi Qudratullah Sanori[ra], companion of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as].

Mr. Suleman Ahmad is the grandson of respected Mr. Abdul Rehman Sabir *marhoom*, ex-*Naib Ameer*/General Secretary, *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, Gujranwala, Pakistan. & ex-Manager, Singer Machines and respected Mrs. Zainab Bibi *Marhooma*.

Mrs. Shah Bano (Economist) is the daughter of respected Mr. Tariq Mehmood Bhatti, Accountant, Pakistan Railways and respected Mrs. Najma Tariq, Lahore, Pakistan.

Kindly pray that may Allah *Ta'ala* bless "MARYAM AMATUS SALAM," with a long, happy, healthy, prosperous life and make her *Quratulain* for the family and true Ahmadi Muslim. *Ameen.*

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Pay Zakat

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DAWAT ILALLAH - AN URGENT CALL TO SERVE OUR NATION

Basiyr Rodney

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لاَّ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَّقَالَ اِنَّنِيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾

"And who is better in speech than he who invites *men* to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely of those who submit?'" Holy Qur'an 41:34

In this short Qur'anic verse Allah has given us a formula for saving our nation from many social diseases. He explains that the best and most eloquent voice in a society is the one that spreads the message of Islam. As is outlined in this verse from *Ha Mim Sajdah*, this spreading of Islam (*Da'wat ilallah*) is connected with (1) the invitation to God (*Da'wat ilallah*) the (2) doing of good works (*amalus salih*) and (3) submitting to God's will

(Muslimeen).

This verse provides important details into how we can ensure the spiritual and material liberation of our nation. Our friends and neighbors must come to know from us that we care about their spiritual well-being and their spiritual health. Our society must know that we have the solution to their material and spiritual maladies. Engaging in the spreading of Islam is therefore a moral and practical imperative if we wish to save our country for future generations.

As Muslims living in the west, we may ask ourselves - how do we spread what is perceived by the larger society as an unpopular message? Why should we even raise our small voice to spread Islam - when we feel that people are not listening? This act of spreading Islam. Ultimately what is in it for me?

There is first a moral benefit. Spreading Islam in our words and deeds enable us to be of those who practice what we preach. Indeed the Holy Qur'an reminds us that Allah is most hurt by the fact that our actions do not follow our words. This moral integrity is the hallmark of the true guardians of the Prophets.

Safeguard society

Any society that falls apart displays a great many lapses in moral judgment. Authority figures loose trust in the people and similarly people lose trust in authority figures.

In the USA today poll after poll reveal that political figures have very low trust among citizens. A recent Pew Poll of public trust in government reveals that since the 1950's today Americans have the lowest trust in government to do the right thing all the time.

The second is a practical benefit. One very popular quote in the English language is the saying "all that is necessary for the forces of evil to triumph is for a few good men to do nothing". If we fail in spreading that which is good, then the inevitable result is that evil spreads. It is a universal law of nature that society trends toward disorder. Allah sends Prophets to restore the balance (*mizan*) or order. We as followers of Prophets have an obligation to hold the line and restore the *Nizam* of God on earth.

A third, benefit to us is that spreading Islam strengthens us spiritually. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an; in a well known and often recited verse that the highest spiritual level is to become "*itai dhil Qurba*" we must give like the giving of family member to family member. How can we say that we are kin (family) but we do not want the blessings that God has given us to be shared with our countrymen. The Holy Prophet[saw]

reminds us that we should "want for our brother, what we want for ourself." If we want to be worshipers of God, and we want to be the doers of good and we want to submit ourselves to God because we know that this is the ultimate aim of life - how could we not want this for our friends, neighbors and people in our community.

In a recent *Jalsa Salana* like this one, in Holland, 2004, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] explains that we Ahmadis should show our gratitude to Allah for His Divine Grace in bringing us to the Messengers - by taking this message of Islam to the whole world. He urged that this act is necessary because we as the privileged ones have a great responsibility. To quote some words attributed to Hadhrat Isa[as] in the book of St. Luke - To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected (Luke 12:48).

It requires sacrifice and personal responsibility.

Dawatilallah is a key to saving our nation because we must call our people away from what the Holy Qur'an calls *Annar* (the fire). We must call our nation away from the fire of war both at home and abroad. The fire of some having so much more to eat while many others are chronically hungry. The fire of the widening gap between rich and poor. The fire of injustice between people of one race or another.

As we are guided by the Holy Prophet[saw] - The *Sirajun Munir* (the radiant lamp) (saws) we see in his example the urgency of *Dawatilallah.* He indeed was called to rescue the world from darkness. He spent his days and nights completely preoccupied in this task of "*Daiyan ila Allahe*" (Caller to Allah).

The coming off the messengers is to bring into being a new Heaven and a new earth. We are called to bring our people away from the darkness into the light of God through the prophets.

We the lovers of God and His Messenger are the real revolutionaries of this age. It is we who are the real patriots!

Instead of love for one nation and one people who hold love for all nations and all peoples.

In his yet to be widely discovered among this new generation of Muslims, Hadhrat Mirza Bashirud Din Mahmood Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II[ra] writes in his work *Inqilab-e-Haqiqi* (The Real Revolution); that a Prophet brings a new heaven and a new earth. So the purpose of the coming of the Messiah is to "establish the control of moral and spiritual values in their truest sense" (p.58).

Although the Real Revolution was written in the 1930's, Khalifatul Masih II[ra] outlined these revolutionary values that our society despite our wealth and power - desperately need.

In spreading Islam, the good deeds (*aamilus salih*) that we do; the humility and love of humanity that we display - will bring about a revolutionary change in ourselves and in society. As the same *surah* quoted here reveals, the ultimate result of the spread of the true teachings of Islam is that "enemies will become warm friends" (41:35).

Dawatillah is the basis of:
1) social unity
2) brotherly love and
3) ethical leadership in this new heaven and new earth.

The wall between rich and poor will melt not because one group overthrows the other. Social justice will not become the norm because we march in the streets and because we lobby or petition the government. Men and women will not truly be equal because a new law or new executive order makes it so. Black and White will not treat each other as equals simply because of street marches or victories won in landmark court cases.

Society will only become truly just when the pure teachings of Islam form the basis of how we live. Society will become truly one when submission to God's will colors our thoughts and actions. Love of God, His Messengers and constant charity towards our friends, neighbors and even strangers is where the real revolution begins.

We want our fellow citizens to know that even as God has provided air for us to breathe, food for us all to eat, families for us to love. And he has done this for hundreds of thousands of years. He has also provided revelation and the messengers to guide us.

The heart of our view towards saving the nation is all about serving the nation. Not just by raising taglines, mottos and slogans like - Love for All, Hatred for None.

We must demonstrate in our own lives the saving power of Islam. We must demonstrate in our own lives, the healing power of Islam. We must demonstrate in our lives the life-giving power of Islam.

Where in Islam are these?

- Balance between love, light and life. e.g. pillars
- Unity among all peoples e.g. *Salat*
- Follow leadership for progress e.g. *Salat*
- The true servant leader e.g. praying for the people questioned about trust.

You may at this point ask the obvious question. Where is the evidence to support the view that spreading Islam will bring such revolutionary change in our society. Is this some pie in the sky idea that we religious zealots hold on to because we believe that our religion is the truth? As a convert, I myself went in search of this question.

The evidence has been presented to us over hundreds of thousands of years. Each time God sends a messenger - the society is in chaos. Things have fallen apart. There is no center to hold the people, the community and society together. People have lost faith in their political leadership, they have lost faith in the religious leadership, they have lost faith in the generation before them and in the wealthy classes in the society. They are often at the point of despair. This is true in the time of Moses, Buddha, Krishna, all the Prophets.

The arts and creative expressions in the society become dark. People begin to look to all quarters for leadership. They look to sports, music, movies, entertainment, the wealthy. All type of celebrities are seen as "the next big thing".

The ties of kinship become weak or begin to sever. Children seek emancipation from their parents. Family relationships become meaningless.

We can look at the time of the Prophet Muhammad[saw] in Arabia and see all of these trends. The *Sirat* (history) of the Holy Prophet[saw] gives clear evidence that Islam has the power to restore family values, restore family relationships, strengthening communal bonds.

Even as I look out over this multitude of brothers at this *Jalsa*. Among them there are brothers by blood and by faith. There are fathers bringing their sons, uncles with their nephews. The same is true among the ladies. We have mothers and daughters, sisters, aunts and cousins. All joined together under the banner of Islam and *Khilafat.*

In examining the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] similar scenes are observed. The Holy Prophet[saw] is the ultimate *Daeen ilallah* (Callers to Allah). Around him are gathered some youths, former slaves and people who were hungry for change in Arab society. They followed the call to spread Islam in word and deed. Day and night they would devote to the preaching of Islam. Their example was so powerful and pronounced that some of their names have come down to us after more than 1000 years! Hadhrat Ali[ra], Hadhrat Zaid[ra], Hadhrat Bilal[ra], Hadhrat Abu Hurraira[ra]. Among the women - Hadhrat Ayesha[ra], Hadhat Hafsa[ra], Hadhrat Ruqqayia[ra], Hadhrat Umme Kulthum[ra].

We saw that in the spread of Islam brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, fathers and mothers all became a part of the Islamic *Ummah.* These close knit spiritual relationships would change the color of society first in *Medinatun Nabi* and then again in Mecca.

It is truly this framing that will attract the youth of our nation to join hands with us. Today's young people are coming of age in a time of economic and financial turmoil. They have been hardest hit by the recession of the last 10 years and are active in their opposition to economic disparities. They have many burning questions about social justice and their place in society.

Issues of race, class and ethnic division still keep the American dream at a distance for so many of our people. Only the true Islam can break these gaps.

We must explain to them as our beloved Khalifatul Masih V[aba] has told us:

"...the advent of prophets is to save humanity from darkness and we should invite them to the God of Islam Who despite their trespasses grants them by virtue of His *Rahmaniyyat.* That they may seek forgiveness and discard the thought that God can be cruel. On the contrary He sends His prophets for the

betterment of people and these prophets weary themselves with sheer concern for their people. Friday Sermon Dec 22, 2006)

We must explain and live the reality that the Prophetic leadership provides individual peace, social peace and economic peace.

Dawat ilallah then is not just a religious duty, it is our civic responsibility. Rather than fight the rise of social problems with man made weapons, we must use the tools given by Islam. Convey the message. God had sent a messenger. He is calling us to the true faith. He is calling our nation to life. He is calling us to unity, to brotherhood and to righteous leadership.

Tell them, come to God and His messenger so that he can give them life.

We must convey to our youth that Allah's message is active in the world. That Islam saves us from despair and gives us hope for a bright future.

We must fan the flames of love of God, love of our fellow beings and love of our nation. And we must do this with better speech.

We must demonstrate with our examples that for us, Ahmadi Muslims, love of Allah (*Huququllah*) and love of His creation (*Huququl Ibad*) are important to our salvation.

We must display the fact that for us Ahmadi Muslims, there is no disconnect with our Muslim identity and our civic responsibility.

In keeping with the Qur'anic teaching we must therefore offer support to "the poor, the orphan and rights of the environment. It is important to help whoever is in need of help." Friday Sermon Dec 22, 2006)

To affirm the question of the first Messiah Hadhrat Isa[as]; We are our brother's keeper!

All across this nation the honor of the Holy Prophet[saw] is attacked and the pure teachings of Islam are in doubt. It is only us Ahmadi Muslims who speak with one clear voice that will spread the true teachings Islam. We uphold the oneness of God and we accept ALL of the messengers. We Preach Love for All, and Hatred for None. We preach tolerance in the face of harsh and deadly oppression in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia. While our members are slaughtered for their faith, we preach prayer and peace. The true Islam teaches us not to spread disorder and chaos in the land. We are truly one's of peace.

It is this message of Love for God, Love for humanity that attracted young people to the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat. It is the blessing of attachment to *Khilafat* and a spiritual community, that has nurtured this attachment.

Today, our young men especially should feel a strong sense of responsibility to offer sacrifices in the field of *tabligh* and serving mankind. In the time of the Holy Prophet[saw] it was the youth of Mecca such as Hadhrat Zaid[ra], Hadhrat Ali[ra] and Hadhrat Abu Huraira[ra] who joined his movement. We know their names now because of these great sacrifices made in youth.

It was Hadhrat Ali[ra] that gave some of the first ideas on how to preach to the *Quraish* and the people of Mecca. So young people should bring their ideas and offer it in service to the cause of Islam and our fellow Americans.

In this regard Khalifatul Masih V[aba] recently reminded us that

"we should not think that by organizing an occasional bookstall or an exhibition here and there we have discharged our duty. The Holy Prophet[saw] preached in this manner also, but he also employed other techniques. We should follow his example and go into villages where there is a relatively more receptive audience. School and college students should try among their peers. " (Friday Sermon Sept 30, 2005)

Indeed if we adopt these means Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an that we will meet with success. In recent publications of *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* and *Majlis Ansarullah* we find many inspiring stories of Americans who came to Ahmadiyyat in their youth. Many of these young men took the message of Ahmadiyyat to the far corners of our cities and towns, Al-Haji Yusef Latif; Munir Hamid, Muzaffar Zafar, Sultan Lateef, Rashid Ahmad, Ahmad Saeed, Munir Ahmad, Nuruddin Abul Latif, Abid Haneef and so many more righteous youth came to Islam Ahmadiyyat. Their youthful years were charged with the desire and the agitation to spread the true Islam all across the American landscape.

They took this message to the highways, the highways and airways all across America. They conquered the hearts of brothers, sisters, cousins, friends, neighbors, teachers, doctors with love, sacrifice and pure examples.

In his commentary on these very verses of *Ha Mim Sajdah* 41:35 Prophet Ahmad[as] explains that these acts of preaching and doing good are themselves effective in bringing an end to hatred and enmity among peoples.

Citing verse 34 of *Surah Ha Mim Al Sajdah* (41:34) Hazoor[aba] said this comes to pass when sincere good deeds are carried out and when such people summon others to Allah they listen to them because of their truthfulness and obstacles are removed for them and the very same people who harbor nothing but hatred for Muslims and cannot tolerate them to gather for worship in their local areas become friendly. (Friday Sermon June 16, 2006)

Even as I close this address, I must leave you with a lesson from our beloved *Khalifa*. Where he sums up our work and our role under the banner of the Prophet Ahmad[as], the Imam of the age.

Hazoor[aba] said the Promised Messiah[as] has most lovingly explained his advent in that he has been sent to remove the ill will that has been created between man and his Maker, to abolish religious wars and to demonstrate a model of humanity that has been suppressed. By providing us with an immense treasure of knowledge and spiritual discernment, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has prepared us for the task of taking this message to others. It is the task of each Ahmadi to rise and present the true concept of God so that the majority of people may return to acknowledging God and the Seal of all the prophets and God's holy people, so that instead of fighting and hostilities people honor each other's rights and develop spiritually. (Khalifatul Masih V, Friday Sermon Dec 22, 2006)

May Allah enable us in this age to be steadfast in spreading this message. May we take the message of Islam to the far corners of this land that we are all blessed to call home.

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SUPPORT HUMANITY FIRST WITH VOLUNTEER SERVICES AND MONETARY DONATIONS

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITION TO THE ARTICLE: BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LOS ANGELES JAMA'AT

(Published in the September, 2014 issue of the Gazette)

Atika Sadeeqa, Los Angeles, CA

1. Imran Jattala and Ramzan Jattala, sons of Ikram ul-Haque Jattala came in Feb.1981
2. Khadijah Jawad along with her son Ishmail came in 1974.
3. Dr. Khalid Sheikh's wife name was misspelled. Her name is Etta Sheikh.
4. Their was a special meeting held in September after the 1974 action against the *Jama'at* in Pakistan. A special message from Hazrat Chaudhary Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra] was read to the *Jama'at*. The meeting was held at the house of Mirza Rasheed Ahmad. The members who attended the meeting were: Mirza Rasheed, Ahmad, Naseera Ahmad, Rahmat Jamal (late), Ashraf Malik, Donna Malik, Atika Sadeeqa, Saeed Ahmad, Sofia Ahmad.
5. Sister Shamim Sheikh with her husband moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1981. She became president of the LA Lajna in 1990 and I served with her as Vice President

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PRACTICAL STEPS FOR SELF REFORMATION

Bilal Rana

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً ۚ يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ع ٨

No landscape poses as extreme a challenge to travelers as the desert. It has captured the imagination of painters and poets who often use the desert as a deep metaphor. Nearly a quarter of the earth's land surface is covered by sand and while deserts are not lifeless, animals that survive there have to adapt to survive in that harsh environment by adopting a very specific set of rules. The verse I opened with translates as follows:

'God said, Verily it shall be forbidden them for forty years. In distraction shall they wander through the land'. (Al-Maidah: vs 27)

The verse that I have recited narrates a very telling incident in the life of Jewish nation when Hazrat Moses[as] led the Israelites out of the bondage of slavery from Egypt under the Pharaoh and into the desert. They became a very arrogant people there. They were very ungrateful to Allah and Allah had told them to enter into the Promised Land which He had himself solemnly promised them. But when He tried them with hardships they became rebellious and they became lazy and cowardly. They didn't follow the injunctions of God. They said, in fact to Hadhrat Musa[as], Go you and your Lord and fight, we sit here.

Our five-volume commentary in this verse states that when the Israelites behaved in a cowardly manner, God decreed that they should remain in the desert for a period of 40 years so that the life of the desert should invigorate them and strengthen their morals. They wandered through the desert in want of Promised Land, which Allah had promised them but Allah had reckoned that they did not yet prove themselves.

The topic of my speech is "Practical steps for Self Reformation" and the challenge with self reformation is that it is always so elusive, just when you think you have a habit under control, you realize that you don't, when you found your spirituality or you think you have, it's vanished and you are left wondering what happened. One of the most zealous companions of the Promised Messiah[as] was a Missionary and his name was Hadhrat Maulvi Burhanuddin Jehlumi[ra] and he once told the Promised Messiah [as] that I have gone through so many spiritual attempts at self reform, I have wandered thr-ough many different sects and when I finally found you, I accepted you and then it was at this point Maulvi Sahib broke into tears and he told Hazoor[as], having toiled and suffered so much, I'm still the ignoramus that I once was. We listen to Friday Sermons, we recite the Holy Quran, we read the Ahadith, we are inspired by all of it, but somehow for us, self reform still remains a problem. Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddique[ra] who was the best among the Companions, once himself admitted to Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] that when he leaves his company he feels that as though he is a hypocrite and while he wasn't it just goes to show how universal this experience is and this feeling is. And it's not just Muslims, it's humanity in general. Today the self-help industry is the largest, single most lucrative book genre and in fact is the best selling non-fiction genre of any book category.

People want to improve themselves and are looking for a place to turn, wandering like nomads in search for a cold drink in a barren desert. Whatever aspect of yourself you want to improve, whether its your *Darsul Qur'an*, whether if you have a habit of gossiping which you want to reform, it will take deliberate, intentional practice to improve yourself, not passive or haphazard steps. It's repetitious, purposeful practice of specific techniques that is going to train your muscles and train your mind to get better at whatever it is that you need to improve upon. You are only going to get better by doing it, not by simply reading or by listening to details of others, but doing, meaning using the time that you have to set aside for deliberate practice to get better on purpose. So at the end of the day, there is no quick fix to our problems. You may read all the self-help books that you want

or read all the blogs that you want online for self-improvement because unless you have a loving relationship with Allah *Ta'ala* that you yourself found for your own sake, that process of going forward cannot actually work. No advice that I give or that any book will give is actually going to help you in the long run. We have to really nurture this type of relationship with Allah. But the question is have we really done that? Do we even pray? Next time, you find it hard to offer *Salat*, think about those Ahmadis who live in countries where they are persecuted for their Salat. Those who have lost their homes, their families, their lives because of prayers. Just how difficult, how hard is their prayer.

We came here to this country so we could pray without fear but if we weren't intending to pray in the future place, then why did we come here? Hazoor[aba] said to some Ahmadis in Westernized countries, You came here to be in a free country, so that you could freely worship but then you left God. So if you weren't going to pray when you came here, then what's the point? You should have stayed back in the country where you came from. It was the Jews who were ungrateful refugees, The Bible elaborates that the Jews were grumbling and murmuring against Moses[as] and against God. Some of then deserted the Jewish *Ummah* all together, wandering into the desert aimlessly and eventually died, not having reached the Promised Land. So instead of showing ingratitude, honor and safeguard your prayers and your *Salat* and it would do the same for you. The Holy Prophet[saw] reformed some of the most crude and unrefined people that were hardened by years of bad habits. The practical instruction for self reform he gave was humility through prayers.

There are two sins which the Promised Messiah[as] said, men are particularly prone to and they are the sins of the flesh and of the ego. It seems like the progression of immodesty in this country knows no limit. If you would believe the average age for first exposure to indecent videos on the Internet is 11 years old, so either we actively engage our youth on this subject or we let the whispering kids on the playground tell our children about these bad pictures and these bad videos. So my message to children is if someone tries to show you a picture or a video and it's not okay for you to show that to your mother or father, then it's not okay for you to watch yourself. It will hurt you. Pornographic addiction is a medical condition just like alcoholism and depression and as a doctor I can tell you it alters the plasticity of your brain and results in real organic changes in your body that undermine your manliness. When it comes to expressing your love to your spouse, you are medically incompetent to deliver. Don't embarrass yourself. There may be some here today, who may have a girl in mind that they want to marry, somebody that you bumped into at school, at work. You have to remember that when we are walking through the hot desert and the sun is beating down and we haven't had anything to drink, we begin to hallucinate. We see things that aren't really there, and when you arrive there you realize that it was just a mirage, an optical illusion. Keep patient, keep praying and moving forward to your destination. March onward, don't get side tracked by mirages, only to miss out on the beautiful oasis that God may have in plan for you.

The other sin that men in particular are prone to, the Promised Messiah[as] said is our tempers. Frustrations of life can make one feel like as if they are stranded in the desert – bearing forsaken trial after forsaken trial, whether it is the mortgage payment you have to make or the screaming children at home, or the dent on the side door of your new car. You have to always stay ahead of your anger, never behind your anger. If someone passes a full comment, you don't take the bait, if you are ahead of your anger. Always stay two steps ahead of your anger. Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] reminded us that if the feeling of anger arises, drink a glass of water or lay down. In other words, break the rhythm, the momentum in anger and then you will abolish its momentum.

Anger is a problem that can quickly ruin a very good man and it happens. So recognize when it is mounting and make preparations. If the desert sends you a sandstorm, and you can't win, let it go. Everything in life doesn't have to get solved. One other area where tempers play into our lives or arises is Domestic Violence and this can happen to any one. Promised Messiah[as] had the best interpretation of the Holy Qur'an in this age and his instructions to us outlined in our conditions of *Bai'at*. The fourth condition of *Bai'at* is as follows: That under the impulse of any passions, he shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his tongue nor by his hands nor by any

other means'.

Beating up on anyone is bad enough but beating up the handmaidens of Allah! Humble yourself in your marriages and in the right moments, even in your parenting of your children. There is no *Taqwa* without apologies. Children, once Hazoor explained, also have honor like your wives. Protect and guard that honor. So these are two sins, anger and the sin of the flesh, Promised Messiah[as] outlined. There are also many sins that don't deal with our personal and family lives but rather deal with external relationships with others and with the *Jama'at*.

Last week in the course of preparing for this speech, I got a call from a *Khadam* who asked to resign from his office and when I asked why, he said some of his friends (and he is a young *Khadam*) said that ever since he had this good post, he's become arrogant and he said things were better the way they were before. He said he wanted to go back. And I read into the situation, he's a teenager and his friends are teenagers and they are doing what teenagers do. So I said don't worry about it too much. But I also reminded (I didn't see any trace of arrogance in him whatsoever), but I took the opportunity to tell him the story about one of the early saints of Islam. He was once asked how did you develop such a refined character and his response was that whenever my enemies speak about me, I listen to them. So when your enemies speak about you, listen to them. The teachings of Islam of self-reform which come in every Friday Sermon are meant to reform us, and whether or not it applies to anybody else, it doesn't matter. It was the Pharaoh's arrogance that led to Allah *Ta'ala's* Divine scheme in having Moses[as] raise from that *Ummah* and take the Jews out of bondage of slavery. So when you read of the arrogance of the Pharaoh in the Holy Qur'an, rather than think about the historical Pharaoh, we should think about the Pharaoh inside ourselves. Is there a Pharaoh lurking inside me? That's what we should think, meaning our own ego. We also spoil our prayers with our bad conduct. We sabotage our own prayer when we offend God by offending those whom He has created. So be humble in your prayers. Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, the Holy Qur'an says. The proper way to pray is with a pure and clean heart. Just like your prayers are not accepted if you don't do physical *Wudhu*, your prayers are not accepted if you don't wash the debris from your heart. So how will we keep deceiving ourselves? Have we taken a long, cold stare in the mirror, asking ourselves who do we see under the veneer of what we want to be and who we think we are. Who are we really? Because there's an image of who we think we are and then the image of God, the actual image. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an, 'They wish to deceive Allah and the believers, but they deceive none but themselves'. This is why every now and then I ask a close friend who I can trust to give me uncensored feedback, more or less, without compliments allowed. So consider going to someone you can trust, gives you feedback without absolutely no buttering up, just give it to me straight, tell me exactly what is going wrong with me. How can I improve myself? Otherwise you may have no idea. The Promised Messiah[as] uses the analogy of a man who has body odor, whose stench others can smell but he himself is utterly unaware of. So ask others, a trusted friend to give you some strong critique, personal critique.

Some of us at some point or another might be hurt by an office holder but the question is can we help ourselves from becoming that person ourselves. Are we also headed in that direction and we don't realize it? We need to remind ourselves why we came into this *Jama'at*? If you came into this Jamaat because of people, you will leave and many have. This *Jama'at* is larger than me or any one person. You should be here for the sake of Allah and for the sake of yourself, that is your relationship with Allah. Your attitude should be, this *Jama'at* is mine no one can run me off. I'm here for my own sake, because of the God whose friendship and pleasure I seek. And the story of the Jewish nation that was wandering the desert, Allah is telling us very clearly what is happening what is coming. He's giving us a road map of what's ahead, what to take, what not to take. And it pains me to see people rushing to the periphery. I know I'm over simplifying it but it needs to be said, it is a type of arrogance, to think that you are smarter, better or that you are above this. Ask yourself, are these the type of people that Allah has blessed? Historically speaking what happens to these people? The prototype of the children of Israel, which we are told we resemble, is very telling and it's very important to remember. Those Jews who left Moses in the desert, left frustrated with his leadership, died alone before reaching the Promised Land. What they thought in their mind was a

Promised Land, the land of milk and honey, it was just an illusion. Personal reformation is painful struggle and there's profound sense of shame when one can't overcome their demons and shame can drive you to *Istighfar* but it can also drive you into depression and suicide. That's a conversation not commonly had among Muslims but if there's anybody out there who's depressed, then you should find a trusted mentor, a friend and you can come to anybody, you can come to me. Often children of immigrant parents suffer from this problem silently. And for good reason because they may feel like they may not have enough in common with their peers at school or at work. They may come home to realize they don't have much in common to their immigrant parents as well.

So if you are having thoughts of wishing you weren't here, then please seek some help. Islam, you must remember, do not lose faith in Allah *Ta'ala*. Islam is the best religion for forgiveness. You may have sins, but remember that it's like a bowl of muddy water, maybe hard to clear, but if you pour clean water repeatedly into it, it's going to win out. Purification of the heart is much like a bowl that you are purifying, a bowl of muddy water with a constant rush of clean water, eventually you will get there. A day will come when your child will have to make choices on their own. It's the desert wasteland. If you want them to survive make it easy for them, make it bearable. Parents, show love to your children, nurture your child. There was once an Ahmadi boy who wanted to go to his Prom and he didn't have anything serious in mind or plan. He didn't want to have a girl around his arm, he didn't have drinking in mind, no after party or anything like that, but he asked his father if he could go. And his father said '*Beta*, I won't stop you from going, but if you go, I don't want to know about it'. In other words, it's going to hurt me. So this boy had to decide, is he going to hurt his father or is he going to hurt his friends, his popular friends. And he decided that he would stay with his father that he wouldn't go to the Prom. And that boy one day became a man and he stands before you at this podium today.

So if a child is being difficult, then for God's sake, he's just a child. Love of Allah is not something you can beat into a child or yell into their ear to get them to understand. Respect office holders, be loyal to your friends and love your parents but ultimately strive to become the person that Hazoor wants you to be. He's your role model. Listen to the call that he raises in his Friday Sermons, even above the good examples that you may think you are seeing before you, because there's office holders, there's parents, there's role models and then there's Khalifatul Masih. He is the only true office holder, the only true role model, he's your only true parent. So if you wish to reform yourself, then you must stay attached to *Khilafat,* which God raised for that very purpose. Don't fall into that delusion that somehow that religious talent is *Taqwa*. Talent is not *Taqwa.* Your ability to speak well, to recite Quran, to lead administratively, none of these things have anything to do with *Taqwa*, meaning people without *Taqwa* could also do those things. So it's not about talents. Talents are gifts but they can become your trials. Sometimes in fact, the brighter the picture, the darker the negative. Every goodness has its roots in righteousness, Promised Messiah[as] said and not talents. So let that be the excellence towards which you strive. When the imminent Companion I mentioned earlier, Hadhrat Burhanuddin Jehlumi[ra] finished his tearful plea to the Promised Messiah[as], Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] gave a response. He said that at the end of my life's journey I feel like as though as I'm just the ignoramus that I once was. Hazoor said that's not true. You strove with all your possessions, when you heard of my claim, you walked all the way from Jehlum to Qadian on foot to find me and when you learned that I was in Hoshiarpur, you walked all the way to Hoshiarpur on foot. That was your love.

Hadhrat Maulvi Sahib was walking through his desert and that's a lesson for us. Walk through your desert. If you fall, if you stumble, get back up, let that stumbling block become your stepping-stone. Promised Messiah (as) says: 'He falls over and over, he stumbles and he gets right back up over and over again', talking about the spiritually reformative nature and condition of man. So the Promised Messiah[as] himself gave his testimony to Hadhrat Burhanuddin Jehlumi Sahib. What greater testimony do we need? May Allah *Ta'ala* enable us to also travel through this desert of life before us that may seem dry, may seem hot but may He enlighten our hearts to see that He is sending a spiritual rain through *Khilafat* and through this *Jama'at*. May he give us the comfort and realization that the Promised Land, which we seek, is actually on our hearts, that the milk and honey, which we seek, is actually in our relationship with Allah. *Jazakallah.*

KHALIFA OF ISLAM, HADHRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD – AMBASSADOR OF WORLD PEACE

Imam Naseem Mahdi, Na'ib Ameer and Missionary In Charge

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

After *Surah Fatiha*, the first Chapter of the Holy Qur'an, I've recited a verse from *Surah Al-Maidah*, Chapter 5, verse 9. Allah says:

5:9] *O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do.*

Mukarram Ameer Sahib, honorary dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, *Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatohu.* May peace of God be on you. The topic of my speech is '*Khalifa* of Islam, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Ambassador of World Peace'. All that I will say is based on His Holiness's directions and on his book "World Crisis and Pathway to Peace", a compilation of speeches and letters of His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, *Imam* and Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He has been working tirelessly ever since God bestowed the mantle of *Khilafat* – the spiritual leadership of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of some 160 million Muslims spread throughout the world, an organized community which can be found in more than 204 countries of the world. Let me say at the outset that there is no other global leader of such stature, who without fail, every week guides millions of his followers to work tirelessly for peace, to sow the seed of understanding and compassion among all the communities where they live and to not just justify themselves, satisfy themselves with words, but to take actions and help those in need and increase communication between peoples. Above all, he asks them to continuously and most fervently pray to God Almighty bring about to peace on earth.

I will be brief and I hope and I pray that everyone present will have a chance to read the book I just mentioned and I request all guests to please use their time with us to ask any question they may have. The world is passing through very turbulent times. The list of conflicts abounds –Israel, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, North Korea and the list goes on and on. The whole of the Middle East is ablaze. Africa is also not free from extreme destabilizing unrest. There is also a global economic crisis that continues to manifest newer and graver dangers almost every week. Economic weapons of mass destruction, destabilizing effects of failure of major corporations with global consequences, defaults of sovereign debt, consequences of vulture funds for poorest of the poor nations, unjust treatment of resource rich poor nations, immigration, economic refugees, etc etc. The similarities to the period just before second world war continue to be cited and it seems clear that events are moving the world at an unprecedented pace towards a horrific third world war. There is an overwhelming sense that things are quickly getting out of control. Too many wars, too much power and wealth in hands of a few, sense of helplessness, sense of powerlessness, simultaneously life of ease and plenty by the few, rising desperation, also plenty of dangerous display of wanton violence and easy availability of weapons. People are looking for someone to step on the stage for concrete, solid guidance in which they can have confidence and that speaks to their heart and mind alike and gives them hope that there is a path that can lead to peace.

The consequences of nuclear war are so catastrophic that none dare even think about them. His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad has been providing such guidance. But before I turn to a summary of what he has to offer, let me say a few words about him. His Holiness

Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba] is the Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He is the fifth successor and great grandson of the Promised Messiah and Reformer Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as]. His Holiness was born on September 15, 1950 in Rabwah Pakistan to the late Mirza Mansoor Ahmad and the late Nasira Begum Ahmad. Upon completing his Masters Degree in Agriculture Economics in 1977 from the Agriculture University in Faisalabad, Pakistan, he formally dedicated his life to the service of Islam. His selfless endeavors took him to Ghana, west Africa in 1977, where for several years he served as Principal of several Ahmadiyya Muslim Schools. He left to inaugurate the Secondary School Salaga where he served as Principal for the school for first two years. Elected to the lifelong position of *Khalifa* of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on 22 April 2003, he serves as the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the international and religious organization with tens of millions of members spread across 200 countries.

Since being elected *Khalifa*, His Holiness has lead a worldwide campaign to convey the peaceful message of Islam through all forms of print and digital media. Under his leadership, national branches of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community have launched campaigns that reflect the true teachings of Islam. Ahmadi Muslims, the world over, are engaged in grassroots efforts to distribute millions of leaflets to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, host peace and interfaith symposiums and present exhibitions of the Holy Quran, to present its true and noble peaceful message. These campaigns have received worldwide media coverage and demonstrate that Islam champions peace, loyalty to one's country of residence and service to humanity.

In 2004, His Holiness launched the annual national Peace Symposium in which guests from all walks of life come together and exchange ideas on the promotion of peace and harmony. Each year, the symposium attracts many serving Ministers, Parliamentarians, politicians, religious leaders and other dignitaries. Just to make clear, these types of symposia have been held by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community wherever the community exists for more than a century. The hallmark of these symposia is that we invite everyone to come on a stage provided by the community, to talk about their faith, so that by knowing each other, people may come closer and peace may prevail and indeed flourish. We make all the arrangements and fund these efforts and hinder no one who wishes to come from expressing what their faiths teach and invariably these symposia lead to beneficial results.

Upon arriving in the UK, His Holiness lent these efforts his own personal participation and took these efforts to a greater and higher level. His Holiness has travelled globally to promote and facilitate service to humanity. Under the leadership of His Holiness, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has built a number of schools and hospitals and provides high-class facilities in remote parts of the world. His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad currently resides in London, England. As spiritual leader of Ahmadi Muslims all over the world, he vigorously champions the cause of Islam through a refreshing message of peace and compassion. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has gone literally to the ends of the earth and written to the leaders of the nations in attempting to guide them to the pathway to peace. He has been fearless in announcing to the world where things are heading, not to create alarm, but to prepare them to think about how the world has arrived in this state of being and how it can avert disasters and chart a course to peace and security for all the people that inhabit this global village. He has forthrightly proclaimed that the only way to ensure peace is for the world to adopt the ways of humility and justice and to humbly, submissively turn to God, for man to become humane, for the strong to treat the weak with dignity and respect and justice and for the weak and for the poor to show gratitude and adopt the ways of truth and righteousness, and for all to turn to their Creator in utter humility and total sincerity, that the way back from the brink of disaster is for nations to make justice an absolute requirement of their dealing with each other. History has taught us that this is the only way to eliminate all traces of future hatreds and thus build a lasting peace. This is the teaching of the Holy Qur'an that he has emphasized in his letters to the leaders of the world.

In his letter to the Prime Minister of Israel, he wrote "Hence it is my request to you that instead of leading the world into the grip of a

world war, make maximum effort to save the world from a global catastrophe. Instead of resolving disputes with force, you should try to resolve them through dialogue so that we can gift our future generation with a bright future rather than gift them with disability and defects."

To the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he admonished, 'there is currently great agitation and restlessness in the world. In some areas, small-scale wars have broken out while in other places, the super powers act on the pretext of trying to bring about peace. Each country is engaged in activity to help or either oppose other countries. But the requirements of justice are not being fulfilled. It is with great regret that if we now observe the current circumstances of the world, we find that the foundation of another world war has already been made."

To President Obama, he wrote "As we are all aware, the main causes that led to the second world war were the failure of the league of nations and economic crisis which began in 1932. Today leading economists state that there are numerous parallels between the current economic crisis and that of 1932. We observe that political and economic problems have once again led to wars between smaller nations and to internal discord and discontentment is becoming rife within these countries. This will ultimately result in certain powers emerging to the helm of government who will lead us to a world war. If in the smaller countries, conflict cannot be resolved through politics or diplomacy it will lead to new blocks and groupings to form in the world. This will be the precursor for the outbreak of a third world war. Hence, I believe that no, rather than focusing on the progress of the world, it is more important and indeed essential that we urgently increase our efforts to save the world from this destruction. There is an urgent need for mankind to recognize this One God who is our Creator as this is the only Guarantor for the survival of humanity. Otherwise, the world will continue to rapidly head towards self destruction."

To the Premier of the People's Republic of China he wrote, "It is my prayer that the leaders of the world act with wisdom and do not allow mutual enmities between nations and people on a small scale to erupt into a global conflict".

And to the Prime Minister of United Kingdom, he wrote, "It is my request that at every level and in every direction we must try our level best to extinguish the flames of hatred. Only if we are successful in this effort, will we be enabled to guarantee brighter future for our generations to come. However, if we fail in this task, there should be no doubt in our minds that the result of nuclear warfare, our future generations everywhere will have to bear the horrific consequences of our actions and they will never forgive their elders for leading the world into a global catastrophe. I again remind you that Britain is also one of those countries that can and does exert influence in the developed world as well as in the developing countries. You can guide this world if you so desire, by fulfilling the requirements of equity and justice. Thus, Britain and other major powers should play their role towards establishing peace. May God Almighty enable you and other world leaders to understand this message."

When laying the foundation of this community, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889, 125 years ago, ladies and gentlemen, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah[as] and *Mahdi* had said that his purpose was 'solely to gather together a group of the righteous people in a community so that a weighty group of the righteous people should make a holy impact on the world'. As his fifth successor ahs been saying now repeatedly for several years, there is an urgent need for us to communicate to the rest of the world, the dire situation that exists, that is threatening to develop the world in an unimaginably devastating nuclear war. It is our duty, therefore, to convey this information to everyone in this great land of ours, which we call home.

We have launched recently a very well laid out program under which every chapter of our United States community shall be called upon to hold meetings in their local area on this topic to highlight these very dangers. Let us all go back and covey this guidance on how to establish peace in the world to everyone. Let us win the hearts of our fellow Americans and ask them to join us so that the world may hear this message of justice, of equality, our respect for every human being, of compassion for the poor and the weak and helpless, of the need to serve humanity. I ask each one of us to make sure that when we reach home, we involve ourselves in relentless and fervent prayer, for this is the only weapon God has given us. And then work hard to convey the message of this

'World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace' book to everyone. May Allah be our helper and bestow success upon us.

I want to end my mentioning one more thing, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad has directed all members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community wherever they live to be busy, being of service to humanity and to help wherever and whatever degree they can by whatever sacrifice is necessary of time, effort, money and resources to spread peace, to help save lives, to alleviate the suffering, to foster development. Much of this work is being carried out all over the world through our sister organization Humanity First, that is now established in more than 37 countries and is doing great work - providing drinking water, running medical camps, establishing hospitals, schools and providing expertise.

The sanctity of life is an essential teaching of Islam and under his direction, all over the world, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are busy collecting and donating blood to help save lives. Here in the US, over the last three years, we have been blessed to run the 'Muslims for Life' blood drives that have been able to help collect more than 34000 pints of blood, enough to help save as many as 100,000 lives in the United States of America. There is much more that can be said but my time has already expired and I say, our last word is 'All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds'. Thank you very much and may God bless you.

MOTHERHOOD -A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY

Namoode Khokher

"My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her." – George Washington (1732 – 1799)

"Give me good mothers, and I shall give you a great nation." – Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 – 1821)

"Paradise is under the feet of mothers." – Prophet Muhammad (570 CE – 632 CE)

My five years old daughter and I were shopping at Target, and suddenly she grabbed a Mother's Day card full of inspirational thoughts about motherhood. She was very adamant to buy that card and give it to me on Mother's Day because she loves me. I was very touched and moved to tears by her gesture although she can barely read the complex script of the card. But the word 'mother' caught her eye. That day I realized, I am not just any person in this world. I am responsible for another living being who is looking up to me in every aspect of her life and her existence in this society will be associated with the way of life I am offering to her.

Suddenly, all those wonderful and nice quotes, which I see during the occasion of Mothers' Day, stare at me with a totally new significance. I begin to comprehend my obligations towards the gift of motherhood that God has bestowed upon me in the form of my lovely daughter. God has consecrated mothers to the ultimate purpose of creation. Not only are they responsible for the procreation of human life, but also the critical duty of nurturing that being into a productive member of our society. Motherhood starts with the conception of a child and in reality it never ends. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] has beautifully portrayed the status of mothers as the highest station among all the human relations and associated it with the utmost reward that mankind can ever achieve – heaven. God has put a huge responsibility on women as mothers. The depiction of the roles and responsibilities of a mother as explained by the Prophet Muhammad[saw] constitutes the absolute denotation of the word motherhood. Mothers can make or break a whole nation. Motherhood is not an easy job and it requires loads of sacrifice. It demands sacrifice of our time, career, and freedom; but it is all for the greater cause of creating a beautiful and harmonious society, spawning a generation, which will be blessed with God's mercy and His love.

On the next Mother's Day, why don't we, as present or future mothers, reflect on the true responsibilities of motherhood? We may be doctors, engineers, artists or scientists, but most importantly many of us are or will be mothers in the future. We need to understand our importance in this universe. God has embedded motherhood in our making. We must fulfill our duties as doctors, engineers, artists, or scientists, but not at the expense of our children.

SAFETY IN THE FORTRESS OF THE MESSIAH

Dr. Irfan Alladin

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾

And you desire not a thing except that Allah, the Lord of the worlds, desires it (*Sura Takwir*, Chapter 81, Verse 30)

Dear Honored Guests, Brothers and Sisters, *Assalamu Alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatohu*

Safety in the Fortress of the Messiah

We live in a world where women and children are bombarded in the Gaza Strip, where some two thousand people lost their lives.

We live in a world where a Malaysian Airliner is shot down over the Ukraine as rebels continue to fight for their allegiance to Russia.

We live in a world where hundreds of schoolgirls are abducted in Nigeria.

We live in a world where the Ebola death count has exceeded 1000 people in West Africa.

It is in this world that we have a book, Our Teachings, the first part of *Kashti Nuh* written by the Masih Mau'ood, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani-as, which has promised safety for all those who enter his home. If one is to speak of a remedy for the afflictions of mankind then is this a panacea in the true sense of the word. When the plague ravaged the Punjab at the turn of the last century, those who entered the house of Hadhrat Masih Mau'oodas witnessed miracles before their very eyes and with the survival of their very lives. When looking at the events of the world theater unfolding before our eyes, our entering the fortress of Hadhrat Masih Mau'oodas seems not merely a blessing but absolutely vital to at least our spiritual survival if not our physical survival. The plague of *Yersinia pestis* yields a high mortality but Ebola is no slouch either with mortality rates approaching 90% with some strains and in some locations. We all know about the spread of HIV / AIDS proved alarming in the late 80s and early 90s until AZT and later other antiviral medications were discovered, but the speed with which Ebola takes a life is alarming. With potentially catastrophic events, including worldwide conflagration unfolding in the Ukraine, Gaza Strip, Nigeria and elsewhere, the plague of Ebola is only icing on the cake. By the end of this speech, I pray that all of you see the necessity of our entering the fortress of the Promised Messiahas.

The Promised Messiahas said that the house for us to enter is not necessarily the dwelling made of mud bricks but the spiritual one in which we follow his teachings to the full extent. The spiritual home is the one where denizens are truly within the walls spiritually rather than an actual hull of a ship or ark.

What are the requirements to be in the walls of the House of Hadhrat Masih Mau'oodas? First and foremost, one must believe in all-Powerful, all Sustaining, Supreme Being, Eternal, Changeless, Perfect. This is done through means of the daily *Salat* as this a principal means of showing one's loyalty to Him. Eventually one's own desires will merge into His will.

"And you desire not a thing except that Allah, the Lord of the worlds, desires it (*Sura Takwir*, chapter 81, verse 30)." He alone would be guided to the right path who makes an attempt to find it and conforms his will to the Will of God.

Hakam tamam dunya per mere Mustafa ho
Razi hain hum usi mein jis mein teri raza ho.

You are the leader of all the worlds!
We are pleased with that in which you are pleased.

Secondly we must not fear the crises the world may heap on us for

they melt in the air like smoke. The daily crises we face, economic, social, political or a mix of the above, should not allow us to waiver from our path. We must be fully committed to the teachings of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] before we will be truly aboard his ship. Only then can we be saved and only when we are saved will we be able to save our family, our relatives, our friends and humanity.

Thirdly, those who honor the Holy Qur'an shall be honored in heaven. It is our honor of the Holy Qur'an that will truly place us aboard this ship. We live in a world where the Holy Qur'an is maligned daily by the media and deliberately distorted by religious leaders who make it their pastime to misrepresent this most beautiful book.

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ

"This is a perfect book." (Chapter 2, Verse 3)

Then there is the so-called pastor Terry Jones who carried 2998 copies of the Holy Qur'an soaked in kerosene in an attempt to burn this great treasure to mankind.

We cannot find much help even among other Muslims regarding whom Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] has said

Yatezamano alanasi yabka minal islami illa ismohu
Wa yabka minal qurani illa rasmohu

A time will come when nothing will be left of Islam except its name. And nothing will be left of the Qur'an except its tradition.

Thus, non-Muslims will attack the Holy Qur'an and most Muslims will be unable to defend it because they would not understand its meaning and its commentary, only its custom.

We must be of the few who honor the Holy Qur'an because we understand it, follow it and defend it. The Promised Messiah[as] makes it clear that we must be fully dedicated to the Holy Qur'an in order to be aboard his ship.

After delineating the requirements of entering the ark of the Promised Messiah[as] including belief in Allah, not fearing the crises of the world and honoring the Holy Qur'an, he underscores the characteristics of those who aspire to enter this fortress by defining whom belongs to my community and whom does not. Those who do not belong to the community include ones tangled in greed, those who are dishonest, those who take part in bribery, those who take part in illegal gratification, those who are disrespectful to parents, those not constantly turning to Prayer, those not dealing with their wife with gentleness as well as the adulterer, those who engage in debauchery, the drunkard, the murderer, the thief, the gambler, the usurper, the oppressor, the tyrant, the liar, the forger.

After looking at all the requirements to be in the community one would wonder how many of us actually meet the stringent and numerous requirements. One would assume we have no murderers in the audience, but how many of us have not been dishonest? How many of us in this world of innovation and technology are constantly turning to prayer? How many of us deal with our wives with gentleness even when they try our patience time and time again? After pondering over the requirements to be within the walls of this fortress, one may find this an insurmountable task. It seems as if it would be easier to build a fortress of our own. On the contrary, if we follow the commandments of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] we will be making ourselves a fortress but simultaneously putting us within the walls of the fortress of the Messiah. This will enable us to have great protection from Allah, *Insha Allah*, as those have had before us.

One such example is that of protection from the Plague or *Dafeeul Balag*, a book written by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] in 1898 in which he prophesied that there will be a serious plague in Punjab, India. It is said that the plague that in other places will be so severe that the authorities will have to sweep the dead, but the plague will not have such an effect in Qadian. The Promised Messiah[as] said that while few people may succumb to the plague, it will not have the same effect as in other parts of the Punjab where it will sweep like a broom. In other areas the plague will take lives like a broom sweeps dirt and scores would perish leaving only a few to survive akin to the few particles of sand that may escape the bristles of a broom. Qadian will be relatively safe from plague and even non-Ahmadis like Hindus and Sikhs living in Qadian will also be relatively safe from the plague.

Regarding the vaccination, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] advised people to get vaccinated but it should be noted that the vaccine lasted only 3 months and again a person would become susceptible to plague. Thus the significance of the prophecy was not diminished by one's being vaccinated because of the high morality of vaccinated patients after 3 months. In addition, despite the limited efficacy of the vaccination, every citizen in Punjab and every government servant must take it.

"*Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar*" means, "Surely those who enter my house will be saved." Thus the real vaccination is *Taqwa.* Such people must turn towards Allah and must not reject or ridicule the Divine message. In fact, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] states, "My heart is rent asunder because of people infected with spiritual plague more than the physical plague".

Merely repeating the initiation or taking the *Bai'at* alone is insufficient as it is important to act on the teachings of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] and follow his example. It says in *Sura Al-Baqarah* Chapter 2, verse 198.

وَ تَزَوَّدُوْا فَاِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوٰى

"And furnish yourselves with necessary provisions for your journey, and surely, the best provision is righteousness."

Also, those who openly oppose Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] will not be saved. While Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] advised others to take the vaccination, he, himself, did not take it because Allah promised his protection.

On April 5th the pamphlet was published stating people should leave all filth and stay clean. The Promised Messiah[as] advised people to sweep away or remove dead rats. He also advised people to go to open areas. Despite this advice some people still became infected with plague. One of them was Maulvi Muhammad Ali who lived in the house of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as]. He developed high fever and buboes or lesions on the skin pathognomic or clearly evident of plague.

One may think that Maulvi Muhammad Ali, a companion of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] and an author and scholar, should not have had any fear given that he was surely safe in the fortress of the Messiah. Then again, the Promised Messiah[as] delineated so many stipulations and conditions as mentioned earlier that anyone may question whether he has met those requirements. In the case of Maulvi Muhammad Ali, he was concerned that he was too arrogant as Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] said

Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar illal ghoroor.

"Surely those who enter my house will be saved except for those who are arrogant."

As there was an exception for the arrogant, Maulvi Muhammad Ali thought the protection of the fortress of the Messiah would not apply to him. Maulvi Muhammad Ali, for example, complained to the cooks in the house of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as]. Maulvi Muhammad Ali stated that with all the knowledge he had and he was given special assignments by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as], why is he merely given *daal* (lentil) to eat? Munshi Sahib Arora[ra] also noted that Maulvi Sahib was arrogant.

Maulvi Muhammad Ali had become so ill that he even called Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq[ra] to write his *Wasiyyat.* Accommodations in the house of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] were so tight that in the room of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] ra there was only enough space for two beds and these two beds occupied the entire area and during the day one bed had to be put on top of the other in bunk fashion in order to walk around the room and the entire family of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] lived in such meager conditions. Such conditions only abet the spread of the plague which make the claim of *Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar* or "Surely those who enter my house will be saved" most remarkable.

When Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood [as] came to his room and saw he had fever and buboes, he said that if you succumb to plague I am a liar and my claim is false (*na oozobillah*). This shows the conviction with which Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] stood by his claim of *Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar.* Then Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] began to pray for him and the fever was lifted and buboes subsided.

(*Haqiqatul wahi,* page 253)

Another example is that of Mir Muhammad Ishaq. His mother, the wife of Mir Nasir Nawwab, had a dream that she has let Dr. Abdul Hakim Khan into her home. Dr. Khan was a follower of Hadhrat Masih

Mau'ood[as] who then became an apostate as he himself claimed to be the Messiah. In a dream in which the enemy enters one's home it is interpreted that someone or some people within the home will suffer or die.

Sometime after, Mir Muhammad Ishaq developed fever and signs of plague. When Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] saw him lying in bed and gravely ill, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] said that if I cannot save my brother-in-law then it would be such a blemish that one thousand signs could not reverse it. Then Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] prayed for Mir Muhammad Ishaq and he was healed. This is how the dead come back to life and how those who enter the home of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] are saved.

Wa ohyil mauta bi iznillah.

"And he gives life to the dead with the permission of Allah (*Sura Aale Imran*, ruku 5)"

It is commonly misunderstood that only Jesus, son of Mary, gave life to the dead. When one reads such passages it becomes evident that the Promised Messiah[as] indeed brought back life in this way.

Besides these examples of the plague there are many others. People in the time of the Promised Messiah[as] took bribes daily as it was their livelihood. These same people, after doing the *Bai'at,* put the satchel filled with money on their back and went village to village, saying I have the money from the bribes I took from you. Come take it back from me.

Ali Rogers of Sierra Leone had 12 wives. At a young age he did the *Bai'at* and then, in accordance with Islamic teachings he kept only 4 of them and sent off the rest.

Bashir Ahmad Orchard was well known to us for his writing and oratory and great piety, but few knew he was an alcoholic and gambler in the past. Once he did the *Bai'at* he did *Wasiyyat* as well for 1/3rd of his income and spent in the way of Allah whereas before he was spending on wine and games of chance. He also became *Waqfe Zindagi* dedicating his life to the *Jama'at* and became the first indigenous European Missionary in the history of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya Muslima.

Mian Imamuddin[ra], Jamaluddin[ra] and Khairuddin[ra] were known as the Sekhwani brothers. Maulana Dost Muhammad Shahid commented that this family of Sekhwan is distinct in that all of its members, fathers, brothers, husbands and sons did the *Bai'at* in the time of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as]. Most families had at least some members whom did not accept. The Promised Messiah[as] also said the Sekhwani brothers were like Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] in that they gave all of their belongings in the way of Allah. The sons of Mian Imamuddin[ra] included Maulana Jalaluddin[ra] Shams and Bashir Ahmad. Bashir Ahmad, the uncle or *Tayya* of Falahuddin Shams developed fever and lumps in his neck such that it appeared he had the plague. They asked Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] if indeed Bashir Ahmad Sahib had developed signs of the plague. The Promised Messiah[as] replied that no one among who know me has plague and, among those I know, no one has the plague so Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] did not feel Bashir Ahmad had plague despite the fever and lumps in the neck. Three to four days and the fever remitted and lumps subsided as well. This shows the conviction of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] for those whom had entered his fortress. *Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar.*

Chaudhary Asadullah Khan from the family of Hadhrat Chaudhary Muhammad Zafrulla Khan[ra] relates that Mehr Sahib from District Jhang came to Qadian to visit his sister who lived there and became ill. While in Qadian, he became interested in the teachings of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] and would go to Masjid Mubarak to see and hear the Promised Messiah[as]. Eventually the sister of Mehr Sahib passed away and was buried and then Mehr Sahib made plans to return to his home in District Jhang so he went to Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] in Masjid Mubarak to tell him he was leaving. The Promised Messiah[as] advised him not to leave as was done in other instances by Hadhrat Masih Mau-'ood[as]. Mehr Sahib told Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] that he believed he was the *Imam Mahdi* after which the Promised Messiah[as] asked why he does not do the initiation or *Bai'at*. To this Mehr Sahib said that he was an alcoholic and he did not want to tarnish the name of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] as people may say that the community of the Promised Messiah[as] has people whom are inebriated. He added that he was such a severe alcoholic that even at his sister's *Janaza* he had a bottle of alcohol in his pocket and had to take some before

he could offer his shoulder to carry his sister's coffin. The Promised Messiah[as] looked up at Mehr Sahib and said that if all of you were free of sin, what would be the need for my advent? What would be the need for me to be sent? Hadhrat Masih-e-Mau'ood[as] continued to walk with Mehr Sahib down the steps exiting Masjid Mubarak. Mehr Sahib said that as he reached the final step he felt an aversion to alcohol so severe that he never wanted alcohol again. It became extremely repugnant to him. Such is the case of those whom have the safety of the fortress of the Messiah.

Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani was a twelve year old boy when he visited Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] and asked the Promised Messiah[as] to take his *Bai'at.* The Promised Messiah[as] told Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani that he was still young and that he should wait and see as he attains maturity. The father of Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani was Hindu and strongly opposed even the thought of his son becoming Muslim. The father had been searching for Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani for several months and finally found him in Qadian. The father told Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] that he wanted to take his son home because the mother was overcome with grief from separation from her son and his sisters were distraught as well. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] interjected stating that if Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani went with his father he would never be allowed to return to Qadian. The father retorted that he would put in writing that Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani would return to Qadian if he so willed. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] vehemently replied that even if the father puts it in writing that Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani would return he would actually not return because the father is a staunch enemy of Islam and the Promised Messiah[as] will beat and confine him to their home in a distant village and may even kill Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] if he tries to return to Qadian. These outbursts by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] were extremely uncommon as he generally did not interfere in such matters in front of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] but Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] was so moved by the plight of Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani that he felt compelled to plead his case. To this Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] declared categorically that if Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani is our son and of our family he will return to us and allowed the father to take his son. When Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] returned to his home, as predicted, he was beaten and tortured and restrained against his will. He continued to tolerate the inhumane treatment because of his love for Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] and desire to be in his fortress. One day the Promised Messiah[as] managed to escape the confinement of his father and managed to return all the way to Qadian where he remained. In fact, Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] was so close to Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] that it was he who went to Delhi with the Promised Messiah[as] when Promised Messiah[as] was to marry Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra]. Finally, at the time of the demise of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as], it was Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] who was with Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] in Lahore. Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] commented that Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] was with her at the time she married Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[ra] and at the time of his demise. Indeed, Allah rewards those abundantly who endure the beatings and persecution as did Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] at the hands of the father but Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani[ra] persevered because of his compelling desire to have safety in the fortress of the Messiah. Persecution should not allow us to waiver in our course to enter the fortress of the Messiah for which people are sacrificing their lives to this very day like the two year old and seven year old girls and their grandmother and an unborn baby who have all become martyrs while we enjoy religious freedom and take the fortress for granted. On the contrary, our *Taqwa,* our spirituality is in a most precarious state as we enjoy the amenities of the society in which we live thereby necessitating that we relish the bastion or fortress of the Messiah and its great blessings.

Our salvation is found in these walls, the very walls about which Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] writes *Inni ohafizo kolla man fidar.* He who enters my house is safe. May Allah enable us to enter the spiritual and physical walls and may He grant us safety in these very tumultuous times. *Ameen.*

Wa akhirudawa anil Alhamdolilla-hirabbilalameen.

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PAY ZAKAT

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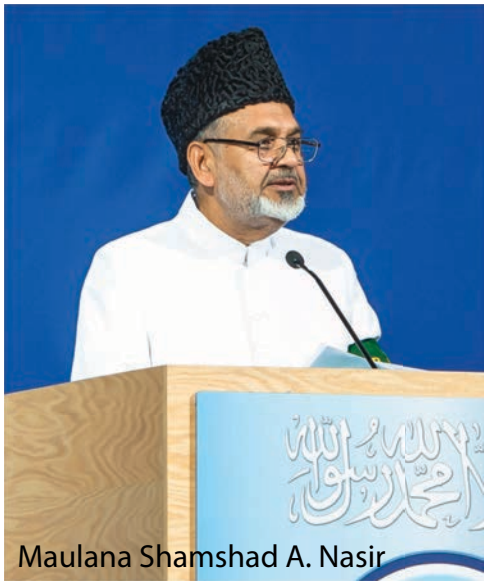
Speakers at the 2014 USA National Jalsa Salana

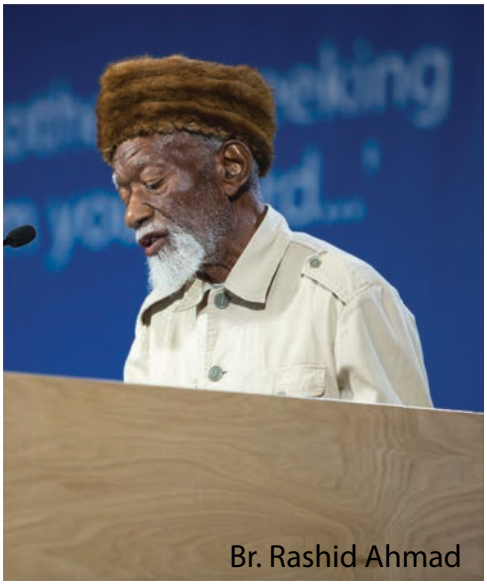
Maulana Naseem Mahdi

Dr. Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad

Maulana Azhar Haneef


Maulana Shamshad A. Nasir

Dr. Faheem Younus Qureshi


Br. Rashid Ahmad

Dr. Bilal Rana

Maulana Talha Ali

Maulana Noman Rana

Speakers at the 2014 USA National Jalsa Salana

Mr. Basiyr Rodney

Dr. Irfan Alladin

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi

Scenes from the 2014 USA National Jalsa Salana

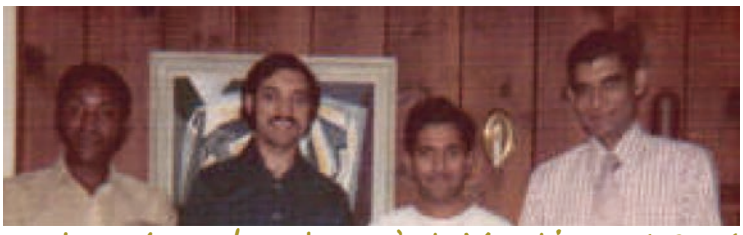
Scenes from the 2014 USA National Jalsa Salana

Scenes from the 2013 West Coast USA Jalsa Salana

Scenes from the 2014 USA National Jalsa Salana

Tarbiyyat Night with Mujeeb-ur-Rahman Sahib held at Baitul Hameed Mosque, Chino, CA

President of Liberia Visiting Ahmadiyya Clinic During Ebloa Crisis



Los Angeles Jama'at Meeting, 1974

L-R: Rahmat Jamal (late), Ashraf Malik, Mirza Rasheed Ahmad, Ikram-ul-Haq Jattala

Los Angeles Jama'at Eid Prayers, 1975

From Left to right: Ismail Jawad Sahib (son of sister Khadija Jawad), Mohammad Ikram-ul-Haq Jattala Sahib, Br. Abdul Haseeb Sahib, Br. Rahmat Jamal Sahib (late), Ahmad Sahib, Ashraf Malik Sahib, Dr. Tahir Ahmad Khan Sahib, Nadeem Malik Sahib (child in the foreground, son of Ashraf Malik Sahib.)

Humanity First USA

(Chapter 90: Al-Balad)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ ①

[90:13] And what should make thee know what the ascent is?	وَمَاۤ اَدۡرٰىكَ مَا الۡعَقَبَةُ ⑬
[90:14] *It is* the freeing of a slave.	فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ⑭
[90:15] Or feeding in a day of hunger	اَوۡ اِطۡعٰمٌ فِىۡ يَوۡمٍ ذِىۡ مَسۡغَبَةٍ ⑮
[90:16] An orphan near of kin,	يَّتِيۡمًا ذَا مَقۡرَبَةٍ ⑯
[90:17] Or a poor man *lying* in the dust.	اَوۡ مِسۡكِيۡنًا ذَا مَتۡرَبَةٍ ⑰

"These verses (vv. 14 - 17) speak of the two methods to raise the moral stature of s people: (*a*) Freeing of the slaves, *i.e.*, raising the suppressed, oppressed and depressed sections of the community to an equal partnership in life. (*b*) Helping the orphans and the poor to stand on their own legs and to become useful members of the community."

(The Holy Quran, With English Translation and Commentary, Volume 5 – Page 2827)

مرا مقصود ومطلوب وتمنّا خدمت خلق است

میرا مقصود اور میری خواہش خدمت خلق ہے

My objective and desire is to serve humanity

ہمیں کارم ہمیں بارم ہمیں رسمم ہمیں راہم

یہی میرا کام ہے یہی میری ذمہ داری ہے یہی میرا فریضہ ہے

This is my job, this is my obligation, this is my duty

Humanity First USA
(2004-2014)

The Nasir Primary School opened in Mali in the first week of November, 2014 with more than 70 students. The school has 6 classrooms with a capacity of over 350 students, offices and a computer center. It is the second of five schools which Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] directed HF-USA to establish in Mali.

The Ahmadiyya Primary School in Morogoro, Tanzania started with two classrooms built with contributions from local Jamaat members. With the guidance of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba], Humanity First is expanding the school. Two more classrooms are being built during Nov-Dec 2014 and the school will be expanded to seven classrooms in 2015.

Under the direction of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba], Humanity First has initiated a major Ebola prevention campaign across West Africa in collaboration with Ahmadiyya Muslim Schools and Hospitals, and MTA. Efforts include:

- Established Ebola field offices in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Mali
- Developing awareness and training videos, radio announcements and print materials through MTA
- Training Ahmadiyya school teachers and community teams in prevention
- Collaborating with other agencies to facilitate treatment and support families of the victims
- Providing protective gear to all Humanity First and Ahmadiyya hospitals
- Assessing establishment of orphanages for Ebola Orphans, food distribution for families of the victim, public screening and testing support

Humanity First USA
(2004-2014)

We have have dug over 60 water wells in the deserts of Tharparker area of Sindh, Pakistan. By the end of 2015 we aim to complete 100 wells

In 2014, we rehabilitated and refurbished 122 hand pumps in Mali, West Africa benefiting almost 100,000 people

Please join us to celebrate
Humanity First USA's
10th Anniversary
For more information:
http://dcgala.humanityfirst.org
Phone: 703-232-0878
Email: info@us.humanityfirst.org

Wednesday, December 10th, 2014
Renaissance DC Downtown Hotel
999 9th Street, NW, Washington DC 20001
7:00 PM until 9:30 PM
Individual Seats - $100

Please join us to celebrate
Humanity First USA's
2nd Annual Telethon
For more information:
http://usa.humanityfirst.org
pervaiz.khan@us.humanityfirst.org

Program will include:
- Keynote speakers
- Team members from across the world will provide updates
- Program videos and informational slideshows

SHUHADA– LIVING AND LIFE GIVING WITNESSES FOR ALLAH

Maulana Azhar Haneef, Na'ib Ameer USA

These days many are told to go and give their lives in the way of Allah in order to earn the honor of being a *Shaheed* and enter heaven with great rewards. Suicide bombers, soldiers, civilians serving as decoys and human shields, men, women and children, willingly giving their lives. It is an unfortunate and tragic tale; so many lives lost and the battle and *Jihad* rages on with no end in sight. Christians sent their men to the crusades with the same promise and hope. In 1095, the Catholic Pope, Urban, called for a war against the Muslims to regain Jerusalem for the Christian faith. In his speech he said:

"Christians, hasten to help your brothers in the East, for they are being attacked. Arm for the rescue of Jerusalem under your captain Christ. Wear his cross as your badge. If you are killed your sins will be pardoned."

In other words, Christians who participated and died in this crusade would be martyrs and would have first class tickets straight to Heaven. Change the words slightly and it is exactly the same message and appeal today.

The word martyr in Greek means to bear witness. The same meaning is in the Arabic word, *Shaheed*. The early Christians had a different concept of what it meant to be a martyr or *Shaheed*. It was a message of professing, preaching and practicing faith. In the Holy Qur'an, the early believers in Jesus Christ[as] prayed:

رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا بِمَآ اَنۡزَلۡتَ وَاتَّبَعۡنَا الرَّسُوۡلَ فَاكۡتُبۡنَا مَعَ الشّٰهِدِيۡنَ ﴿۵۴﴾

'Our Lord, we believe in that which Thou hast sent down and we follow this Messenger. So write us down among those who bear witness.' (3:54)

They were sincere believers in God and helpers of Jesus. Of course as a result of professing and preaching faith, they did suffer persecution and opposition, and many were put to death in cruel and tortuous ways. But that was not the intent – to go and die for something. It was to live and impart faith and spiritual life to others.

This is also true for a Muslim. He is not to see the glory of death on a battlefield, but profess, proclaim and preach the greatness of God. A Muslims proclaims this truth in the basic *Shahada* of faith:

'I bear witness that there are none worthy of worship except Allah, He is One, without any partner…'

These are also the words of the *Adhan* which the *Muezzin* proclaims loudly from mosques to call Muslims to prayer and remembrance of Allah: *Allahu Akbar*, I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. In short, a Muslim through his words and deeds, in heart and soul, five times a day, and in every situation and circumstance throughout life bears testimony of belief in Allah. His or her life, and at times death, announces to all around that God exists. Yes, He is not visible through the naked eyes but He comes into clear view through his or her faith and deeds.

Allah Himself bears witness to

شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهٗ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۙ وَالۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَاُولُوا الۡعِلۡمِ قَآئِمًۢا بِالۡقِسۡطِ ؕ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الۡعَزِيۡزُ الۡحَكِيۡمُ ﴿۱۹﴾

this truth, saying:

"Allah bears witness that there is no God but He — and also do the angels and those possessed of knowledge — Maintainer of justice; there is no God but He, the Mighty, the Wise." (3:19)

Allah and His angels proclaim this great truth through His magnificent work – all of His creation – and His Messengers and their followers – who recognize God – profess it in word and deed. Thus in this basic expression and formula of faith, each and every Muslim, all of us, young and old, men and women, are living witnesses for Allah, and through our

faith and deeds we can give life to others.

This testimony is of four levels and stages. The first is through the life of the '*Saliheen*' (the righteous – the beginning stage of belief). Then come the higher stages of the testimony through the lives of the martyrs, the truthful and finally the highest testimony through the lives of the prophets.

Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as] states:

"We supplicate in our Prayers: Guide us along the straight path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favors. This means for the purpose of advancement in faith and for the benefit of mankind we seek four types of signs in the shape of four excellences - the excellence of the Prophets, the excellence of the truthful, the excellence of the martyrs and the excellence of the virtuous. The special excellence of a Prophet is to receive from God knowledge of things hidden which should be a Sign. The excellence of the truthful is that one should so completely possess the treasure of truth, the verities comprised in the Book of Allah, that because of their outstanding character they should be a sign, confirming the integrity of the righteous person. The excellence of the martyr is that he should possess such firmness of faith and such strength of character and such steadfastness in times of trial and troubles and hardships that they should be a sign for him. The excellence of the man of virtue is that he should so completely discard every type of mischief and become such an embodiment of goodness that his virtue should become a sign, because of its extraordinary character. These are then the four kinds of excellence that we beg of Allah, the Exalted, five times in our daily Prayers."

(*Zameema Tiryaqul Qulub*, p. 4).
(*Shahaada*)

Hazoor[aba] states:

"For the attainment of great objectives, sacrifices need to be presented. At times, sacrifice of life needs to be presented. The members of the Community do present all kinds of sacrifices wherever they are needed, and are always ready for to present them. Sacrifice of life is a part of it, which bestows the status of *Shahaadat* on the ones who present it,

Such people are entering the heavens of the pleasure of Allah, the Most High. But *Shahaadat* is not limited to martyrdom. The meaning of Shaheed is not limited to martyrdom. The youth who raised the question, as well as the elders, need to know the deeper meaning so that everyone may try to attain the status of *Shahaadat* and understand the soul of such prayer, and enter the paradise of the pleasure of Allah.

Once, the Holy Prophet[saw], said to Abu Huraira[ra] that if only the ones martyred in the way of Allah are going to considered Shaheed then there will not be many Shaheeds among my followers.

In another saying, the Holy Prophet[saw] said, a person who desires martyrdom with a sincere heart, Allah, the Most High, will include him in the category of *Shaheeds* even if he dies on his bed.

We also see at the time of Badr, that the Holy Prophet[saw], referring to His promise, asked for victory and asked for the life of his companions who were with him in the battle of Badr. He did not ask for their attaining the status of *Shaheed* by sacrificing their lives. He had beseeched that if the Muslims were annihilated then no one would be left to worship Allah.

Allah has mentioned worship as the very purpose of mankind. Therefore, the real purpose of the creation of man and the true believer is not to present his life once, rather it is the continuous effort to attain the pleasure of the Almighty, and to be prepared for any sacrifice at any moment.

This also is mentioned in the sayings of the Holy Prophet[saw] that a believer should not desire confrontation but if he is forced into a confrontation then he should not step back due to fear and should offer the sacrifice of his life and not pull back at all. During the periods of wars, a believer attained to the status of *Shaheed* while confronting the enemy or gained victory without any fear or apprehension.

Conversion of Abu Dharr

The detail of afflictions inflicted upon 'Ammār, his father Yāsir and mother Sumaiyyah, who once were kept in the slavery of the Banī Makhzūm is spine chilling. One time, when these devotees of Islām were being victimized by physical torment, the Holy Prophet[saw] passed by coincidentally. The Holy Prophet[saw] looked towards them and compassionately said,

"Be steadfast, O family of Yāsir! For Allāh has prepared paradise for you in recompense for these very hardships."

Ultimately, Yāsir met his demise by this torture, and as for the elderly Sumaiyyah, the cruel Abū Jahl struck a spear into her thigh so mercilessly that piercing her body it reached her private area, and this innocent lady gave her life tossing in pain at that very place. Now, only 'Ammārra was left. He was also subjected to extreme torture and anguish, and it was said to him, "Until you deny Muḥammad[saw], we shall continue torturing you." In extreme frustration, 'Ammārra said certain inappropriate words, upon which the *Quraish* released him. However, quickly thereafter, 'Ammārra presented himself before the Holy Prophet[saw] and began to weep bitterly. The Holy Prophet[saw] asked, "Why 'Ammār, what is the matter?" He responded, "O Messenger of Allāh, I have been ruined! These tyrants gave me so much grief that I uttered some inappropriate words about you." The Holy Prophet responded, "How do you find your heart?" He responded, "O Messenger of Allāh, my heart is still a believer and is satiated in the love of Allāh and His messenger." The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "Then all is well. May Allāh forgive your mistake."

A NEW ABDUL LATIF

"O Abdul Latif may thousands of blessings be showered on thee, for thou hast, in my own lifetime, manifested unparalleled fidelity for me and I do not know how my followers will behave when I am no more among them."

I realize that some members of my Community are still in a spiritually weak state, so-much-so that some of them find it very difficult to stand firm on their pledges. But when I consider the steadfastness and sacrifice of Sahibzada Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Latif[ra] the Blessed, I begin to feel more confident about them. It seems it is the design of Almighty God Who had granted such steadfastness and devotion to some of them that they not only rendered financial help but were even ready to sacrifice their lives also in His cause. He would raise in this Community a number of men who would possess the spirit of Sahibzada Abdul Latif[ra]. I had seen in a vision which I had about the time of his death that a tall branch of a cypress tree from my garden had been cut off and I said: Plant this branch in the soil again so that it may grow and flourish. I interpreted this vision as meaning that God Almighty would raise in my Community many more who are like the great *Shaheed*."

Abdul Latif Al-Mur accepted Ahmadiyyat through watching MTA Al-Arabiyya. He is an Emarati national and belongs to a prominent family in Khur Fuqan in the Emirate of Sharjah. He was immediately transformed through his acceptance of the *Imam* of the age and he enthusiastically began preaching the message of the Promised Messiah[as] to everyone he came into contact with.

After his conversion, he had the opportunity of meeting Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] during the UK *Jalsa*. He asked that Hazoor pray for him that he becomes the "Sahibzada Abdul Latif" of the Arabs. Hazoor said that it was not easy to emulate the great martyr of Ahmadiyyat and one needed to show great courage and steadfastness in the face of great adversity to follow in his footsteps.

Soon upon returning to Sharjah after meeting with Hazoor, brother Abdul Latif started facing severe opposition on account of his Ahmadi faith. His family, friends and neighbors all took it upon themselves to "cure" Abdul Latif of Ahmadiyyat. One of his cousins, who used to go by the name of Iblees, was their ringleader and Abdul Lateef's chief tormentor. He used his contacts in the local *Shariah* court to formally accuse Abdul Latif of apostasy and heresy. Abdul Lateef was promptly arrested by the authorities and asked to recant if he wanted to win back his freedom. All sorts of threats were made against him, including the threat that his wife and baby girl would be taken away from him for ever. His business collapsed. No lawyer wanted to take his case. The few that did insisted that he forsake Ahmadiyyat, and warned that otherwise he would rot in prison for ever. Inside prison, he was verbally abused and taunted for his belief in the Indian Messiah[as].

There were murderers, rapists, child molesters and drug dealers in prison with him. All of them consoled each other but were united in their contempt for Abdul Latif, calling him the most dangerous man in person because of his Ahmadi faith. But Abdul Latif stayed firm in his belief and rebuffed all efforts to steal the light of Ahmadiyyat away from him. He continued to do *Tabligh* while in prison

until they started to socially boycott him. He also steadfastly refused to pray behind the non-Ahmadi *Imam* in prison who incidentally also happened to be a convicted child molester.

Abdul Latif was repeatedly offered that he can win his freedom immediately simply by signing a document renouncing Ahmadiyyat. His family would be restored. His business would be returned. But he refused. Two of the judges on the three bench panel of the court hearing his case were his close relatives. After a sham trial, he was sentenced to five years of hard labor. He stood like a lion in his prisoner's cage and his only response to the verdict was a loud '*Alhamdolillah*'. He was looking straight into the eyes of the judges who could not bear his gaze and were instead intent on staring at the grossly unjust verdict they had just rendered. The only message he sent was to *Hadhrat Ameerul Momineen* in which he said that "Abdul Latif is like a rock. They cannot shake my belief in Ahmadiyyat. Tell Hazoor not to worry for me and request that he pray that I may now finally follow the example of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif *Shaheed*[ra]."

He was released due to Hazoor's prayers after several months in prison. His first reaction was to try and meet with the ruler of Sharjah and explain to him that Ahmadiyyat is true Islam and his *ulema* were leading people astray by opposing the beautiful message of the Promised Messiah[as].

LETTER

To my beloved: Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar *Shaheed*:

Assalamo'alaykum wa Rahmatullah,

My heart aches and my eyes are full of tears because when I close them, I see your beautiful face smiling at me. I don't remember if I ever saw you not smiling. From today onwards, I promise to smile more than ever before. Every time you spoke, your voice was so tender and full of love and affection, regardless of who you addressed. From today onwards, I promise to speak more softly and affectionately. Your love for humanity knew no bounds. You knew your life was at risk, yet you traveled to Rabwah to serve mankind. You spent your time and money to serve God's creation. From today onwards, I promise to serve humanity with my time, wealth and profession. You were a very loving father and a husband. Despite your busy schedule, you spent time with your family. You taught your kids how to read the Qur'an. You looked after their education. Every time you came to the mosque, you brought your sons with you and looked after them. Never did I see you frowning at them. From today onwards, I promise to treat my family like you did. You were very hard working. You used to serve the *Jama'at* in various ways. You were an artist, a poet, and you loved to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat. From today onwards, I promise to offer my services to the *Jama'at*. I will serve the *Jama'at* in every way I possibly can. Your colleagues cannot stop talking about you. When they heard about your martyrdom, the entire hospital staff was deeply saddened. They say you were very well mannered and you had excellent morals and etiquettes. From today onwards, I promise to treat my colleagues with excellent etiquettes.

O my beloved *Shaheed*, Allah truly loves you, for He granted you this high status. May Allah continuously raise your status in the hereafter. *Ameen*!

Goodbye my beloved *Shaheed*, till the day we meet again.

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Hadhrat Abu Umamah bin Bahli[ra] relates that (on one occasion), the Messenger[saw] of Allah asked, "Who will make a pledge to me? Thauban, a freed slave of the Messenger[saw] of Allah said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! Take a pledge from us.' He[saw] said, 'Then make a pledge to me that you will not ask for anything from anyone.' Thauban said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! What will be the reward for this?' He[sa] said, 'The Heaven.' Hearing this, Thauban made the pledge.' "

Hadhrat Abu Umamah[ra] states that he saw Thauban in Mecca, in a large crowd, while he was riding, his whip would fall down and at times it would fall down on the shoulder of a person, who would pick it up and try to give it to him but he (Thauban) would not take it until after dismounting first and then he would take it.

(At-Targhib wat-Tarhib, p 100/2)

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ZIKR-E-HABIB: BRINGING THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE

Sahibzada Dr. Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لاَّ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Allah *Ta'ala*, the Creator and the Lord, the most Powerful is Alone, is the Dominion over life and death. The verses I just recited, the translation is:

"He it is who gives life and causes death. And when He decrees this thing, he says concerning it 'Be, and it comes into being'.

It is the *Sunnatallah* that He manifests His attributes through His Prophets and shows His presence through their words and their actions. History is marked with the appearance of God's Prophets but the closest to Allah, the most perfect manifestation of His attributes and the greatest champion of His unity is the Chief of all Prophets, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa[saw]. He is the true living Prophet who resurrected a multitude of morally dead and spiritually bereft souls. He performed myriads of miracles and continued to revive those who truthfully follow him and love him with all their being. In following our most beloved and perfect Prophet Muhammad's[saw] footsteps, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] was also imbued with the ability to bestow miracles on those who were fortunate to meet him and accept Allah's signs. In Chapter 8, vs 25 of the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ لِلرَّسُوْلِ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيْكُمْ ۚ وَ اعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَ قَلْبِهٖ وَ اَنَّهٗٓ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

O ye who believe! respond to Allah, and the Messenger when he calls you that he may give you life (8:25)

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] writes, 'The Prophet Muhammad[saw], the son of righteousness at whose feet thousands who have died of paganism and atheism and evil living were revived and come to life and a sample of the judgment day was exhibited'. (*Majmooa-e-Ishtiharat)*

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] elaborated upon the miraculous revival of the morally and spiritually dead in the following words. He said:

Have you any notion what was the strange event that occurred in the desert country of Arabia when hundreds of thousands of the dead were revived within a brief period and those who had been misguided through generations put upon Divine color, and those who were blind obtained sight, and those who had been dumb began to speak of the understanding of the Divine, the world underwent a revolution which had never been seen or heard of before? It was the supplications during dark nights of one who had lost himself in God, which raised a clamor in the world, and manifested such wonders as appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one. Send down Thy blessings and peace, O Allah, on him and his people according to the amount of pain and anguish he felt for his *Ummah*, and pour down upon him the lights of Thy mercy forever. *(Barkat-ud-Dua)*

The status of the Messiah and Mahdi was given to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] because he too drowned himself in complete love and obedience to his Master to the point of nonexistence. In submitting wholly to Allah, the world witnessed the Second Manifestation of miracles through Promised Messiah[as] due solely to Promised Messiah's[as] commitment to the following Qur'anic verse:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ

" Says if you love Allah, follow me,

then Allah will love you " (3:32)

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] said, " I am the practical and living proof of this Divine promise and you will recognize me through the signs of those who are loved by God Almighty and are his friends set out by the Holy Qur'an. In an Arabic couplet the Promised Messiah[as] says about Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa[saw]:

"Surely I have been brought back to life by His Life giving Grace. Praise to be Allah, what a miracle, what a life he has granted me".

This perfect allegiance and obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw], an unprecedented love for him, allowed him to partake of the Divine light and nearness to God so much so that the Promised Messiah[as] received this revelation, "you are from me, and I am from you". This revelation was a confirmation of the Promised Messiah's[as] position and status in God's eyes; a status which would manifest itself in the many miraculous encounters of Hadhrat Sahib would exhibit.

Another revelation also confirmed his status as a defender of the Unity of God. He received the revelation: "Thou art to me as to my unity and my uniqueness." Allah *Ta'ala* chose the Promised Messiah[as] to revive the message of Islam and to show humankind the true attributes of the Living God. Promised Messiah[as] demonstrated the signs of Divine power and intervention and raised the spiritually dead and revived the ones at the brink of death by Divine command. God reveals his purpose in another Divine revelation in 1886:

"O victorious one! Thus does God speak so that those who desire life may be rescued from the grave? Those who desire life may be rescued from the grip of death and those who are buried in the graves may emerge therefrom and so that the superiority of Islam and dignity of God's word may become manifest unto the people and so that truth may arrive will all its blessings and falsehood will depart with all its ill so that the people may understand that I'm the Lord of power, I do whatever I will so that they may believe that I'm with thee. *(Tadhkirah)*

The Omnipotent, All Powerful God established that His attribute of *'Al-Bais'* - the Resurrector could be manifested through his Messengers. Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] elaborated that raising the dead means:

1. To give spiritual life
2. Through prayers, bring back to life those who were at death's door

Countless signs have been exhibited during Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood's[as] life when his prayers have brought people back to life, when they were left for dead. One such miracle was when Nawab Abdur Rahim son of Hadhrat Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan Sahib[ra], a Companion of the Promised Messiah[as] fell seriously ill in Qadian and his life was almost despaired off. The Promised Messiah[as] writes that Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan requested me for the prayers. He writes:

"He beseeched me for prayers, so I retired to *Bait-ud-Dua* and prayed for him. After I prayed I learned that his death has been decreed. And that it was futile to pray at that time. Upon this I said, Lord, if the prayer is not to be accepted, then I intercede on his behalf that you may cure him for my sake. Those words involuntarily escaped my lips", he says. "But afterwards I was filled with remorse for having uttered those words. Immediately after this I received the revelation 'who can dare to intercede without His permission?' I fell silent after hearing this revelation. Hardly a minute had passed before I received the following revelation 'You are granted permission to intercede'. I then prayed fervently and I could feel that this time the prayers would not go unanswered. The boy recovered that very day, that very moment and it was as if he had come out of his grave. I know for a fact, he says that the miracles for Jesus whereby he gave life to the dead were no greater than this. I'm grateful to God that many miracles of this kind have been demonstrated at my hands."

Nawab Abdur Rahim Sahib lived a long life. I personally met him a few times when he visited Rabwah from India and it was a living miracle, his life was a living miracle of the prayers of the Promised Messiah[as].

Another experience of Divine favor bestowed upon Hazoor[as] himself, he narrated. He says 'Once I fell so seriously ill that people thought I was about to die and *Sura Yasin* was recited to me three times. But God Almighty accepted my prayers and healed me without the agency of any medicine. I had fully recovered when I woke up the next morning. Immediately received the revelation 'This is if you are in doubt as to the mercy which we have poured upon our servant, then do bring precedent of such recovery', but no such precedent can

be found for Allah had destined to show His miracle through our beloved Messiah and Mahdi [as] who recognized. He says 'I have had numerous similar experiences in which only through prayers and earnest concern on my part has God Almighty healed the sick. Their numbers defy counting.'

Allah foretold of the countless people who would be cured of their spiritual and physical illnesses in the following revelation, which he received:

'Disease of the people and his blessing'. Hazoor[as] explained the meaning of this revelation that means that people suffering from disease will be blessed through me. This includes both those suffering from spiritual disorders as well as those suffering from physical ones. Thousands of people who have entered in to the covenant of *Bai'at* with me had been involved in different types of vices but after making the covenant they repented of these vices and become regular in their prayers and become inspired with the eager desire to purify themselves of evil passions. As regard to those suffering from physical disorders many of them have been healed through my supplication'.

These miracles of healing defy medical science even today. Hazoor[as] narrated the case of a young boy by the name of Abdul Karim of Hyderabad, India who came to Qadian to study. He was bitten by a rabid dog and was sent to *Kasauli*, a town where specialized treatment was provided. He was treated there for a few days and then was sent back to Qadian. However, a few days later, he started to show signs of rabies infection and became hydrophobic. He was scared of water, and scared of people. While his condition rapidly deteriorated, The Promised Messiah[as] writes about this incident in *Haqeeqa-tul Wahi*. He writes:

'I was deeply moved out of pity for this poor boy who was so far away from his homeland and I felt a strange urge to supplicate for him. Everybody thought that the poor boy would expire within a matter of hours. Inevitably, he had to be moved out of boarding house and was placed in a room away from other people. He was given great care and a telegram was sent to a British doctor in *Kasauli* inquiring if there was any remedy available for his condition. The reply came by telegram that there was no remedy for him. This added to my feeling of pity for him and I was deeply concerned about this poor, homeless lad. My friends also insisted that I should pray for his pitiable condition and it aroused great compassion inside of me. I was also afraid that if he died, under these dire circumstances, his death would provide enemies with an occasion to rejoice. This further added to my feeling of sympathy for him and I was moved in such an extraordinary manner that such a feeling could not be self-induced. It could only be caused by God Almighty Himself. This emotion is so powerful that with God's permission, it can very nearly bring the dead back to life. In short, the condition of absolute reliance *"Innallah"* was vouchsafed to me and when my concern for the boy reached its limit and anguish took hold of my heart, the patient who had been as good as dead, began to show signs of recovery. He, who had been afraid of water and light, at once took a turn for the better and said he was not afraid of water. In fact, he was given water which he drank fearlessly and then he performed ablution with it and offered his prayers and slept through the night. His frightful and wild condition vanished and he recovered completely within a few days. I was suddenly made to feel the madness had not come to him as a presage of death'. But rather it was meant as a sign of God. It must be noted that even today, with so many medical and technical advances, the survival of symptomatic rabies infection is zero. Nobody survives. Yet, what is medicine and technology in the face of God's powerful will?

Another miracle of sick being healed, is mentioned by the Promised Messiah[as] himself, who wrote:

'Once a leading Arya of Qadian, by the name of Malawa Mal was stricken with tuberculosis. His fever had become chronic, and all hopes for his survival were diminishing. One day he came to me and requested treatment. He felt utterly hopeless and cried bitterly. I prayed for his recovery and God answered. 'O fire of fever, cool down and become a source of peace'. Hence, he recovered within a week and he's still alive. *(Nazul-ul-Masih)*

In a time of pre-antibiotic and advance stage of tuberculosis was certain death sentence, another example of the miracle of the Promised messiah[as] was witnessed.

Hadhrat Dr. Syed Abdus Sattar Shah[ra], a companion of the Promised Messiah[as] gave his own personal account of the fulfillment of the Promised Messiah's[as] prayers when his

wife fell ill. Hadhrat Syed Abdus Sattar Shah[ra] was a physician himself and was the father of Hadhrat Umme Tahir[ra] and grandfather of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh]. He stated, "When I accepted Ahmadiyyat, my wife was reluctant to perform *Bai'at* as she did not want to offend her religious leader, lest that he may curse her. Also she was afraid and concerned about people rebuking her for accepting Ahmadiyyat, though she had a favorable opinion of the Promised Messiah[as]. Once she became very sick after contracting typhoid fever. And her condition deteriorated over the next few days. When there was no hope for recovery, I asked her to send her nephew to Qadian to request the Promised Messiah[as] to pray for her recovery as well as to acquire some medication from Khalifatul Masih I, Hadhrat Maulvi Nooruddin[ra] who was a renowned physician of his time.

Her nephew reached Qadian the next day and requested the Promised messiah[as] earnestly prayed and told him that 'I prayed for her recovery intensely and may God have mercy on her'. And then he stated 'Go and tell Doctor Sahib not to worry for God will make her well.' Hazoor[as] also asked Hadhrat Hakim Maulana Nooruddin Khalifatul Masih I[ra] to prescribe some medicine for him. The same night, Hadhrat Doctor Sahib's wife's condition deteriorated so much that they did not think that she would last through the night. And that night she had a dream in which she saw a big tent outside the clinic where Hadhrat Doctor Sahib used to practice and the people were saying that this tent belonged to Mirza Sahib Qadiani[as] and men sat on one side and women sat on the other side. First the men would go inside and come out, one at a time, then the women's turn came and they would go inside and individually came out. When her turn came, she covered herself and in extreme weakness walked into the tent and sat herself in front of the Promised Messiah[as]. Hazoor[as] asked her what are your complains? She pointed her finger to her chest and replied that she had fever, chest pain and weakness of heart. He asked a servant to bring a cup of water, where he took the water, prayed over it and gave it to her with his own hands to drink and then he said 'May Allah cure you'. Then Hazoor[as] and other people prayed and she drank the water. She then asked him who are you and what is your name? He replied I am Masih Mau'ood and Mahdi Mau'ood and my name is Ghulam Ahmad and I reside in Qadian. Still in the dream she saw that, by the grace of God, she felt better after drinking the water and then she made the promise to the Promised Messiah[as] that she would soon present herself to Hazoor[as] for *Bai'at*. And then she woke up from her dream. And when she woke up, she felt that she's feeling much better. She asked for some food and asked people to help her sit up. Hadhrat Dr Abdus Sattar Shah[ra] continued to narrate that 'That night we were in despair regarding her condition and supposing that her funeral may take place in the morning. However, when she woke up in the morning, we were surprised, beyond belief, as if the dead had come back to life. She told me of the dream and said this is the blessing of the water promised with his prayers'.

Hadhrat Syeda Saeeda-tun-Nissa, that is her name, insisted that she goes to Qadian as soon as possible to fulfill her promise made in her dream to take *Bai'at* of Masih Mau'ood[as]. By Allah's plan, her daughter Hadhrat Maryam Begum[ra] was to marry Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] and she was to become the mother of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh]. It is evident that the Promised Messiah[as] brought a transformational change in the lives of those who accepted him. His companions manifested such a profound change as if they had died and had been given a new life filled with Divine light and had made them unrecognizable for them their previous selves. The change was so palpable, that even his disciples could perform miracles.

Hadhrat Maulana Ghulam Rasool Rajeki[ra], a companion of the Promised Messiah[as] narrated an incident in which one well-known person in his area fell very sick. The family summoned a renowned Hakeem to treat him while also calling upon a *Hafiz* of Qur'an to pray for him but the patient's condition deteriorated to the point where there was little chance of recovery. Hazrat Maulana Sahib[ra] was in the vicinity performing a *Tabligh* mission. The family sent for Hadhrat Maulana Rajeki Sahib[ra]. When he came to see the patient, the treating physician was an opponent of Ahmadiyyat and the Promised Messiah[as], said to Hadhrat Maulvi Sahib[ra] that this patient has no chance to heal medically and then he challenged if Mirza Sahib is Masih and Mahdi, then show us the miracle of his blessing. Hadhrat Maulvi Sahib[ra] wrote, 'When I heard that I felt heavenly energy within me and I made my way to the patient

and said *Assalamo Aliakum*. He recognized me and replied, 'Thank God, you have come'. And I put my hand on his forehead and within ten minutes his fever and his other symptoms were gone and he felt completely normal. The physician was astonished, exclaiming '*Mirzais* are masters of sorcery'. Hazrat Maulvi Sahib[ra] continued 'I said to him that you had asked me for a sign of truth regarding Hadhrat Mirza Sahib and Allah has just fulfilled that condition. If you don't accept Ahmadiyyat now, you will not escape God's punishment?' But unfortunately, he still remained an opponent of Ahmadiyyat and few days later he died.

The Divine favor bestowed upon the Promised Messiah[as] of giving life to the lifeless and healing the sick did not stop with his passing away nor did it stop with his companions. The blessing continued through his *Khulufa*. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih often tell us inspiring stories of so many who visit with the Promised Messiah[as] in their dreams and are guided to the true and the Living God.

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq[ra], a Missionary writes one of his experience when he was in the United States. He wrote:

"When I arrived in the United States, many newspapers published the news of my arrival. I received a letter from a lady in St. Louis who wrote 'whenever I'm faced with difficulties and I pray and I see a person in my dreams in an Asian dress. He guides me and he helps me through my problems. The morning after my dream, decided that if I see him next time, I will ask the name of my benefactor. But at that moment I forgot. That person appears to be an Indian, and you have come from India also, so I wonder if you could help me in this matter'."

Hadhrat Mufti Sahib[ra] said:

"Three thoughts came to my mind. Firstly, it could be the Promised Messiah[as], secondly it could be Khalifatul Masih II[ra] who was the Khalifa to the Promised Messiah[as] at that time and thirdly myself because I was sent here as a Missionary. Thus, I sent her all three photographs. She returned two photographs and kept the photo of the Promised Messiah[as] attached with this note 'I have found my benefactor' and she then accepted Islam.

The blessing of accepting Allah through his Prophet[saw] are so profound as to create impossible feats to establish spiritual awakening that the world had since forgotten. Hadhrat Maulana Ghulam Rasool Rajeki[ra] quoted the Promised Messiah[as]. He said one time that:

"The Sun takes two weeks to completely reflect its brilliance through the full moon. But if a person spends a week in our company with true intentions and complete faith, he can attain perfection from our spiritual beneficence in one week".

We sit in this hall more than 100 years after the demise of the Promised Messiah[as], though he is not physically with us, his spirit and his blessing continue to flourish. His mission continues and his message is spread through the Second Manifestation of Divine power, the Khalifatul Masih. Though he is not with us, his prayers continue to create Divine favor for his *Jama'at* – his spiritual children. Though we cannot speak with him, we can and must listen to his message, his exhortations, his warnings and his glad tidings. Though we cannot walk behind him in the streets of Qadian, we can and should study his life, his morals, his behavior and his conversation so that we may develop a kinship and true love for him. Though we can't touch him, we must strive to be worthy of touched by him to bring the change he desired to see in us. Though we cannot physically sit in his company, as did his companions *"Rizwanullah Ajmaeen"* and absorb the Divine light which made them shining stars, we can absorb the light of his teaching and attain his spiritual beneficence.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] raised millions of spiritually dead and we are the fruits of his miracle. We must preserve and protect our spiritual life from these forces of evil who attack us in various guises. It is unthinkable that having been saved and showered with Divine light, we let ourselves and our children drift into darkness. Let us always remain among those who have been raised from the dead and safeguard ourselves with this prayer:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ
لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ
الْوَهَّابُ ۝

Our Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after Thou hast guided us; and bestow on us mercy from Thyself; surely, Thou alone art the Bestower. (3:9)

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CLOSING REMARKS BY DR. AHSANULLAH ZAFAR, AMEER JAMA'T

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لاَّ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Jalsa is coming to a conclusion for this year, but in some ways it doesn't go away. When we come together as we have done this weekend, the memories of being here, of listening to the speeches, of interactions. *MashaAllah* there are 7000+ people who attended this year but even so there was enough of an interaction we would remember those who we met, the things we talked about and things we are going to follow up as we go through the rest of the year. Hopefully, till next year when we meet again. The message of *Masih-e-Mau'ood*[as] is for the next 1000 years. His writings and statements, they are going to be subject to interpretations as we go along. They will apply to the circumstances differently because life is not uniform and by its very definition, things change and the need for what understanding we must have, that changes. Life is also not in control of one person. God Himself controls everything. There are smaller issues which arise which wee seem to have some handle on them. But at a deeper level, *Allah Ta'ala* Himself, He is working through his angels about the very conception of each one of us from way back and it keeps on going forward and He influences and affects circumstances in ways we cannot object to His way of doing things. We only have to worry about what we can do as we go along. Khalifatul Masih V[aba] sent us a message, a very exhaustive message which was read in the opening of the meeting and I believe most people are familiar with it, although some people were not there at the opening session.

I am not going to read the message in its entirety but I'll skip through it to highlight a few things. One thing that he is talking about very consistently is the need and the importance of paying attention to his *Khutabaat*. Hadhrat Sahib's *Khutbaats*, they are not put there casually. He puts a lot of focus on what he's saying because he realizes that the *Jama'at* now is spread all over the world. It is not like it used to be when most of us were in Rabwah and there was time when the *Khalifatul Masih* would interact in a different way, in a more local way. That option is not there very much. It is very limited, the scope of that is in England or when he travels. The vast expanse of the *Jama'at* which literally spans the entire globe, requires that everybody throughout the world, pay attention to what he is saying. Now we have the benefit of MTA, for more than a decade now, where we are able to receive the *Khutabaat* of *Khalifatul Masih* regularly and even as it happens. I think in America we are even more fortunate because our setup, I believe, is multifaceted. The direct transmission is through the web and there is an ability to obtain the *Khutbaat* even afterwards through the use of the Internet. It is quite convenient, I realize some people might not have broadband Internet, but most people do. We should pay close attention to what he is saying. What he says has vast consequences for how the *Jama'at* will shape up. It has very deep consequences for how the word of Ahmadiyyat, the message of the Messiah will spread. It is dependent upon how we pay attention to the *Khutbaat* and then we try to reflect on them. And try to apply the issues that he is raising to our circumstances. Our individual circumstances would vary some, but by and large, the things he is asking for are quite straightforward – honesty, hard work, loyalty to your country, fellow mankind, be attentive to what their concerns are, you do it only in a limited fashion and that's alright but do it. Do little bit, if you can do a little bit. But be kind to our neighbors, be kind to the man in the street you interact with, and work with the system of the government and the politics that we have in America, which is a good system. You could say it is not a perfect system but it is a good system and we need to work with it and that is the only way we can accomplish the purposes that the Messiah[as] has laid out for us. I'm trying to put it in a nutshell, his message is

the only way we can accomplish the purposes that the Messiah[as] has laid out for us. I'm trying to put it in a nutshell, his message is four pages long, and I don't want to start reading it again. However, it will get printed and it will be in the Gazette, so that individuals can access it.

The opportunity also requires me to acknowledge the work of a lot of people. I'm aware of not everything but I'm aware of a lot of work which goes on at this *Jalsa* and throughout the year. You know, by and large, we are a volunteer organization and there is a unique flavor to being a volunteer organization. We also have full time workers- Missionaries, *Murrabbis*, that's what we call them. *Masha Allah* they are doing a good job and God bless them for everything that they do and help them. We have teams working here at the *Jalsa*. They have been working for quite some time in order to make this gathering happen.

I'm told and I'm aware of teams staying up to the wee hours of the morning in order to settle down everything which had been done the day before and to be ready for the day to come on the next day. They do it for the love of it, they do it for the favor of Allah, they do it because they like to work together with each other, there is blessing in that camaraderie and may Allah bless them all and take care of them and may their tribe increase. I have to borrow an expression. But I hope they keep on increasing and growing and flourishing *Insha Allah.*

The summary of the attendance is something like this. I'm given a total of 7000+ people who attended the *Jalsa* this year. *Masha Allah.* Out of that 3100+ are ladies and 3700+ are gentlemen and the total number of guests are 336 and these are from 17 countries. I know they are from Myanmar, from Guatemala, from Bangladesh, they are from Pakistan of course, we have a lot of guests from Canada *Masha Allah*, some from England, from European countries, they are all welcome here. We are happy they are here with us. With that I'm going to conclude and ask you to join me in silent prayers. Prayers are very important. You might not see us rising in a spaceship as we pray, that's not the way it works. The prayers, they work, there is no way around it and *Allah Ta'ala* will listen to your prayers and Masih Ma'ood[as] has used a lot of expressions, remarking at the end of the Jalsa in his lifetime. He said that all those who are here, may they travel back in safety, may their worries and their sorrows, their *ghum o hum*, that may Allah relieve them and take care of them and help all of you in different ways as you travel to your homes and throughout the year and thereafter as well.

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Tarbbiyat Night/Mosque Sleepover
Los Angeles East and Los Angeles Inland Empire

Submitted by Department of Tarbiyyat, LAE and LAIE

On November 7th 2014, under the guidance and instructions of *Imam* Zafrullah Hanjra Sahib, *Tarbiyyat* Departments of LAE and LAIE *Jama'ats* arranged for a *Tarbiyyat* Night at Baitul Hameed Mosque. Fifteen *Atfal* and approximately Six *Nasirat* attended the program. Program began after *Isha* Prayers and ended the next morning after *Salatul Tahujad* and *Fajr*. Respected Mujeeb-ur-Rahman Sahib had a question answer session with the attendees. In this gathering Mujeeb-ur-Rahman Sahib shared with children his life lessons. Children asked questions. Program was interactive and it lasted for about an hour. A group photo was taken.

Imam Hanjra sahib then discussed with children many *Tarbiyyat* related topics. This was also an interactive session. Imam Sahib would discuss a topic and then ask each child to come to podium and repeat what he had learned in the form of a speech. Children enjoyed it. Later, *Imam* Sahib practiced *Nazam* with children. At 10pm program ended. Seven *Atfal* stayed at the mosque for sleepover. *Masha Allah*, all of them woke up at 4am to participate in *Saltul Tah*ujad followed by *Saltul Fajr*.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MY UNCLE

Zahid Ahmed, Connecticut Jama'at

A dear and pious uncle, a *Moosi,* Kaiser Mohammed Sahib, son of Sheikh Mohammed Rafique Sahib, passed away Friday, August 15th 2014 at his residence in Chennai,

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ

He has earned a place in *Bahishti Maqbara*, Qadian, India.

Kaiser Mohammed Sahib is the grandson of Sheikh Haji Mohammed Ibrahim Sahib, who accepted Ahmadiyyat at the hands of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra] and on the maternal side he is the grandson of Yusuf Khan Sahib (older brother of Dr. Hashmatullah Khan Sahib) who were both *Sahabi* of the Promised Messiah[as].

Always being mindful and having fear of Allah Almighty, my uncle went out of his way to make financial sacrifices such as helping people in need and those who could not afford an education. He has served the Chennai *Jama'at* as *Na'ib Ameer, Qazi* and Secretary *Umoor-e-Ama* for three terms. In addition, his duties in regards to the *Jama'at* occupied his entire life span. He was regular in his prayers and exhorted his children to be observant of them. Furthermore, his calmness and peaceful mind always overtook any anger or negative thinking, and he never unduly asserted himself with pride over others, even those who were placed under him.

As a righteous and truthful person, he advised his family and friends with wisdom and kindness. He always reminds me that our faith and trust in God is the greatest asset, and everything can be achieved through prayers. Also, at time of hardships at work or at home, he gave away a greater portion to the *Jama'at*. These unique characteristics of my uncle will leave a lasting legacy and others will always yearn to be like him. May Allah Almighty raise him to the highest ranks in heaven.

He is survived by his wife Nusrat Jehan Sahiba (daughter of Muhammad Siddique Bani Sahib of Calcutta, India) and five children, three daughters and two sons. Also, Kaiser Mohammed Sahib has three brothers, Dr. Shahid Ahmed (President of Brooklyn *Jama'at*), Majid Ahmed (Connecticut), Rafi Ahmed (Brooklyn), and one sister, Ansa Ahmed.

Please remember this family in your prayers and pray God give patience to the grieved family members, *Ameen.*

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Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "One should feel in his heart as much modesty in front of Allah as is His right. They (the Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw]) said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! We do observe modesty. And *alhamdulillah* (All praise is due to Allah).' He[saw] said, 'It is not so. Rather, the one who feels modesty before Allah, should safeguard his mind and the thoughts within it, and protect his stomach and the food which fills it. One should always think about death and trials. The one who worries about the Hereafter forgets about worldly attractions. So whosoever adopts this way of life, indeed feels in his heart as much modesty in front of Alla-h, as is His right.' "

(Tirmidhi sifatal qiyamah)

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Obscenity makes a thing ungraceful, whereas, modesty renders beauty to it."

(Tirmidhi kitabul bir wssilah)

66th JALSA SALANA USA

A report by Lajna National General Secretary –Hifza Hayee

By the sheer Grace of Allah the Almighty, the USA *Jama'at* held its 66th *Jalsa Salana* at PA farm Show complex, Harrisburg PA from August 15-17, 2014.

Friday August 15, 2014

After many months of planning, on and offsite meetings and dedicated efforts of volunteers who spent numberless hours on Wednesday and Thursday to prepare the venue, Friday brought together Ahmadi brothers and sisters from all across the US to attend and partake of this spiritual *Ma'ida* (spiritual food). The proceedings of *Jalsa Salana* started with the flag hoisting ceremony followed by the Friday prayers. Imam Naseem Mehdi Sahib talked about God's Benevolence and Mercy in His Friday sermon. The first session of Jalsa started traditionally with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and a poem followed by the opening remarks of *Ameer Jama'at* USA Ahsanullah Zafar Sahib. The session included motivational speeches by the prominent scholars of our Jama'at. The program was relayed to both men and women.

Saturday August 16, 2014

The ladies session on Saturday began with the recitation of *Surah Al-Naml* Vs: 60-66, which calls to mind the Unity of Allah, followed by a beautiful poem by the Promised Messiah[as] expressing his love for Allah, "*Aye Khuda Aye Karsaaz*". Two eloquent speeches **"Allah the One"** and **"Blessings of Durood"** gave us wonderful reminders on our true purpose: to love and obey Allah alone and follow His Messenger[saw]. Then we heard a moving poem praising the Prophet of Islam[saw]. The final speech of the morning **"Hadhrat Amma Jaan – A beacon of Light"** had an English as well as an Urdu version. The speakers related many incidences of Hadhrat *Amma Jaan's*[ra] life highlighting her pure, humble and devoted nature, and giving us many practical examples to implement in our daily lives.

The morning session concluded with Talent Awards and certificates, which were presented to *Lajna* students for their outstanding academic achievement and to *Lajna* members who certified as Holy Qur'an teachers. Medals were given to three members, two of them committed the entire Qur'an to memory and one had memorized the thirtieth part of the Holy Qur'an in the last year. *Lajna* and *Nasirat* who made outstanding contribution in the *Lajna* initiative of *Jihad* of the Pen also received certificates of appreciation. *Nasirat* who had completed the first reading of the Holy Qur'an during the past year were also acknowledged and received a copy of the Holy Qur'an signed by *Sadr Lajna* USA.

The afternoon session opened with the recitation of Holy Qur'an *Surah Al-Ahzab* Vs: 42 -49, which calls upon believers to follow Allah's Light - His Messengers, and then a beautifully sung poem "*Iman MughKo De De*" – *Grant me faith.* The first speaker addressed the challenging issue of keeping to our faith and remaining confident in our Muslim identity especially in the high school and college environments: **"Walking the Fine Line".** Two speakers then talked about the journey of life that led them to accept Islam and Ahmadiyyat: **"Meeting the Messiah".** At this point *Sadr Lajna* USA welcomed on stage the sisters who joined the fold of Ahmadiyyat in the previous year and presented them each with a welcome gift, while a beautiful poem "*Hay Daste Qibla Numa La ilaha ilallah*" sung by a group of members in the background set a joyful mood.

In *Sadr Lajna Ima'illah*, Saliha Malik Sahiba's, closing speech **"I shall give precedence to my faith over all worldly matters"**, she emphasized that the purpose of the coming of the Messiah was to bring mankind to God and called to mind the promise we as Ahmadis have made in our pledge at his hand of *giving precedence to faith above worldly concerns.* She gave instances of how Allah manifests Himself in miraculous ways to those devoted servants who do give preference to Him and remain steadfast in His path. She pointed to our daily *Jihad* of self –reformation as the Latter Days are grossly materialistic and people are mainly self-absorbed, we must constantly seek Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and protection to achieve our goal of being engrossed in Allah's love. The Ladies session on Saturday concluded with heartfelt silent prayers. There were many inspiring and thought provoking take home messages raised by

different speakers throughout the day.

Sunday August 17, 2014

The 66th *Jalsa Salana* USA concluded on Sunday with a joint morning session delivered from the men's side and relayed to all. This session, like Friday, had motivational and inspiring speeches given by scholars that left lasting impressions. The whole event was a wonderfully informative and uplifting one, *Alhmadolillah*!

Various Booths at the Jalsa Salana

Many booths were also setup to add to the festivities of Jalsa and were frequently visited during lunch, dinner and other breaks. Attendees enjoyed a variety of snacks at the Fundraising booth and purchased clothes, jewelry and other items at the Handicraft's booth. Many books – new and established, were available at the bookstall. Booths like the *Waqifat-e-Nau*, *Nasirat*, Homeopathy, First Aid etc. rendered services throughout the *Jalsa*.

Our heartfelt prayer is that May Allah enable each and every Ahmadi to become a pure and true ambassador of Islam that serves the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah[as]. *Ameen*!

Special Activities Jalsa Salana

Lajna Ages 15-25 Exhibition and Dinner

The annual *Jalsa* dinner for *Lajna* 15-25, which was held on Saturday from 6:30 to 8:30pm in the Susquehanna Room was well attended by 190 young women, *Alhamdulillah*! The girls were given a name tag, a chocolate and a souvenir at the reception. This year's souvenir was a small candle holder and candle with a decorative label reading, "You are a seed planted by the hand of God." (Hadhrat Masih Mau-'ood[as]). The session began with a very brief presentation by AMSAW on how to start an Ahmadi women's organization on a college campus followed by an interactive workshop conducted by *Muavina Sadr* In charge of activities *Lajna* ages 15-25, on the Promised Messiah's[as] call for Ahmadis to leave a holy impact on the world. She quoted examples of Ahmadis who made tremendous sacrifices to improve the condition of the world. Questions were posted to discuss the topics of sacrifice and commitment. Girls answered the questions insightfully using personal incidents and good understanding of our teachings. *Sadr Lajna Ima'illah* was also present at the meeting.

A poster display showing local and regional activities and camps of *Lajna* 15-25 from July 2013 to July 2014 was setup at the *Lajna* ages 15-25 *Jalsa* booth. Qur'an commentary projects from the 2013 Central Region Camp were also exhibited for the youth and general membership.

Waqfe-Nau Booth -Waqfe-Nau Class and Waqfe-Nau Rededication Workshop

245 members attended the *Waqifat-Nau* class organized at the occasion of Jalsa. This number included the *Waqifat*, their mothers and siblings. The highlight of this program was a well- prepared presentation on the topic of "Conditions of *Bai'at* – Practical Applications in Daily Life." The presenting *Waqifat* explained each condition of *Bai'at* in detail and gave short examples on how these conditions of *Bai'at* could be fulfilled in our daily lives. Sadr *Lajna* presided over this class and gave concluding remarks. She reminded mothers to be the devoted, loving examples for their girls and to help them in their commitment of *Waqf* by their own participation and obedience to *Khilafat* and *Nizame Jama'at.*

The *Waqifat-e-Nau* rededication workshop was attended by 75 *Waqifat*. This workshop elaborated upon the rededication process, its significance and the proper protocol of becoming a *Waqif-e-Zindagi* (life devotee).

The *Waqfe-Nau* booth at *Jalsa Salana* provided general information to attendees and a special Desk provided Career Counseling / guidance to the *Waqifat*. *Waqifat* updated their contact information at the booth. Older *Waqifat* were trained to guide the visitors regarding *Waqfe Nau* Syllabus, Classes/Tests etc. A Jeopardy game of general and religious knowledge was setup at the booth, which attracted the passersby to visit and win prizes.

Rishta Naata Meet and Greet

On Friday evening August 15, 2014 at 8:30 PM a *Rishta Na'ata* meet and greet was organized by the *Rishta Na'ata* department. This program gave an opportunity to the marriageable candidates and their guardians to meet with other people with similar purpose and discuss potential matches.

ALLAH, THE ONE

Nazia Kurshid Ahmad - Baltimore

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۚ ﴿١﴾

اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۚ ﴿٢﴾

لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۙ ﴿٣﴾

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

Hope. In Islam, we are taught to always have hope.

But how can we have hope when we are bombarded daily with images of war, images of child casualties, images of humans celebrating the annihilation of other humans?

How can we have hope when we live in the land of the free and the home of the brave, but the number of Americans being diagnosed with depression increases by 20% every year?

How can we have hope when we are divided by chaos in our minds that leaves us in anxiety and distress? How can we have hope when we are divided by man-made labels that segregate us by nation, status, religion, and race?

In such dissension, in such hopelessness, how can we keep hope?

The answer is:

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad[saw] is His Messenger"

Have you ever stopped to consider the harmony and unity that emanates from this simple statement? Although the world might seem like it's falling apart - how profound is it that at any given moment in time, there are millions of people all around the world prostrating in one direction - toward the Ka'aba?

Unity is the hope for the hopeless!

In all the conflict and division, Islam binds us together as one. God is One.

The Promised Messiah[as] explains the perfection that is Allah's Oneness in "Lecture Lahore":

"If one of His attributes were to be defective, all His attributes would be defective and therefore His Unity cannot be established unless He were without any equal in His attributes as He is without any equal in His Being...This is the Unity which the Holy Qur'an teaches and which is the basis of our faith."

(*Lecture Lahore, Ruhani Khazain*, Vol 20, pages 152-155) (*Essence of Islam*, Vol 1, pg 47)

The Promised Messiah[as] also says:

"How unfortunate, indeed, is the man who does not even know that he has a God with power over all things! Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring even though one may have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose one's self to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will save you. What shall I do, and by what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to their ears so that they should listen. If you belong to Allah, rest assured that Allah will indeed belong to you."

(*Roohani Khazain* Vol. 19: *Kashti Nuh*, pp. 21-22)

If we can master the art of understanding and incorporating Allah's Unity into our lives, we can make a drastic difference in the world. We cannot only give focus and peace to our own lives, but we can actually bring the whole world together in harmony.

So how can we experience and understand Allah's Oneness? Through His Messenger, our beloved Muhammad[saw], the lens through which we experience God.

Muhammad[saw], about whom the Promised Messiah[as] writes:

"It is a false and stinking notion that belief in the Unity of God can be achieved otherwise than through the

Holy Prophet[saw]..."

(*Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 22, pp. 120-121) (*Essence of Islam*, Vol I, pg 41)

Muhammad[saw], who leads us to embrace Allah's Unity by telling us: "The biggest sin is setting up equals to Allah..."

(*Bukhari*)

Setting up equals to Allah, or *shirk*, is something that is often dismissed as a sin of the past, such as in the time of Hadhrat Ibrahim[as]. The Qur'an, in 6:77-80, tells us the story of how Hadhrat Ibrahim[as] showed his people the foolishness of worshipping anything other than the One God.

He pointed up at a star, twinkling in the sky, and he said, 'What if we were to worship this star? Let's say this star is our Lord.' But when the star disappeared at the end of the night, he said: 'I like not those that set.' Then he saw something even brighter - the moon - illuminating the night sky. Again, he said, 'What if we were to worship the moon? This moon is my Lord.' But again, when the night ended and the moon disappeared, he said: 'I like not those that set'. Then, he saw a light even greater than the moon. He saw the sun, in all its glory, shining its light all over the land. At this, he said, 'This is the greatest and brightest, surely this is our Lord!' But when the sun, too, set, at the end of the day, Hadhrat Ibrahim[as] told his people: "I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth [Who created the stars, the moon, the sun], being ever inclined to God. And I am not of those who associate gods with God." (*Holy Qur'an*, 6:77-80)

Hadhrat Ibrahim[as] showed his people that Allah is the only everlasting one. Allah is the only permanence in our lives, everything else is temporary and unreliable. Allah is the One.

Today, we may not worship the stars in the sky, but our society is built upon worshipping the stars of Hollywood and Bollywood. We are spending hours watching TV, hours on the Internet following our favorite celebrities. Hours running errands, hours rushing our kids from swimming to tutoring - hours and hours and hours. And suddenly, the day ends. And we realize we have not offered a single *Salat* that day. We have not praised Allah's Unity even once, and then we wonder why there is so much restlessness and uncertainty in our hearts and minds. These distractions from Allah's Oneness are what have become our modern-day idols.

The *shirk* of our day and age may not be as obvious as stone idols or the sun and the moon. It is usually not even a conscious decision that we make. It is something that happens when we are caught up in the daily, busy, grind of life. It is when we forget that praising and emulating Allah's Unity is what will conquer the discord.

But remember, there is always hope. Allah never leaves His people without guidance.

As Allah sent Hadhrat Ibrahim[as] to unite the people of his time back to the Oneness of God, today we have the Promised Messiah[as], who tells us:

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth...He is the source of all grace, the ultimate cause of all lights and the fountainhead of all mercies...Earth and heaven, man and animals, stones and trees, souls and bodies, have all come into existence by His Grace."

(*Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 1, pp. 191-192, footnote, *Essence of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 38)

He says: "True Being and True Existence and all true qualities belong only to God and that no one is an associate with Him in respect of them. He alone is alive in His Being and all others are alive through Him. He exists in His own Being and everything else exists through His support."

(*Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 23, pp. 272-276) (*Essence of Islam, Volume* I, pg 57)

Not only do we have the Promised Messiah[as] to guide us, but Allah has also sent us the system of *Khilafat* that unites tens of millions of Ahmadi Muslims around the world. We have Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba], who can silence millions of people with a simple gesture of his hand. He tells us:

"The Unity of God does not simply mean that one is not an idolater."

He says: "Rather Unity of God has a connection with everything in the world...Whenever a person becomes reliant on some worldly means he commits shirk and his claim to be a believer in Unity of God is negated because Unity of God

necessitates that man is only reliant on God. The very meaning of Unity of God is that man looks up to the One God alone in everything, be it spiritual or temporal."

(Friday Sermon, May 9, 2014)

Being reliant only on God is something that each of us can attain if we can truly recognize and understand God's Oneness. It is something we can attain when we emulate His unity by making everything in our lives revolve around one unified goal, one purpose: to worship the One Allah Almighty. When we do grocery to feed our family, let's do it because Allah has asked us to care for our family. When we watch TV or sit at the computer, let's make sure that whatever we are doing is in obedience to Allah. Do everything for Allah - and that way, everything we do will become unified through one common goal. When we can establish unity in our lives, then we can begin to understand the unity of Allah.

And what can achieving unity and focus in our own lives mean for society as a whole? What can it mean for the bigger picture?

You see, when Hadhrat Bilal[ra] accepted Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet[saw], his owner, Umayya bin Khalf, used to drag him out in the afternoon heat, lie him down on the hot sand, and pile hot stones on his chest. He would urge him to deny the Unity of God. It would have been so easy for Hadhrat Bilal[ra] to just utter those words and be freed from the torture. But he chose pain over *shirk*, and cried out: *Ahad, Ahad.* The One, The One.

Today, we are also under trial. Our hot sands and the stones on our chest are the discord and disarray that are dividing us and distracting us from Allah's Oneness. The hatred is our Makkan enslaver, the enmity is the stones that on our chest. Today, Umayya bin Khalf is not just one man - he is every politician and public figure who manipulates us into strife; who urges us to recant our loyalty to One God by turning *on* each other, rather than turn *to* each other. We must show the same fortitude as Hadhrat Bilal[ra]. In the face of this conflict, we must take every chance we can get to have our hearts, our souls cry: *Ahad, Ahad.*

Say, He is Allah the One; Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him."

(Holy Qur'an, Chapter 112)

We all stem from the same seed. Every plant, every animal, everything on this earth, this universe, all the galaxies - we are all connected as branches of the same tree. No matter what the creed, color, or complexion of each individual leaf on the tree - our roots are the same. No matter who gave birth to us, the Being who gave life to all of us is the same. He is Allah, The One.

Hazdhat Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra] expands on this concept in "Our God". He says that since we are brothers and sisters as citizens under one government, this helps us to understand that we are also brothers and sisters under one God. In essence, this makes all of mankind one family.

He writes: "The result of this faith is that all bias, discrimination, mutual prejudice and antagonism disappears, giving way to love, affection, harmony, sympathy, and brotherhood."

He continues: "It is essential for world peace and the progress of nations that they live together in peace and harmony, and not let prejudice take root in our hearts."

(Our God, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra], Page 148)

Until we begin to live our lives to reflect this Unity in our every movement and every moment, we cannot truly appreciate Allah's Oneness. Until we unite as family members, extended relatives, members of a local *Jama'at*, residents of a city, and as citizens of the world, we cannot understand Allah's Unity. Until we forgive each other's small differences; until we stop waging war because of man-made borders and factions, we cannot truly appreciate our Creator, and we will not win over His Mercy. Until we vow to never again rise from any *Sajdah* without promising God that we will seek out His Unity and weave it into every breath we take - until then we will never have peace.

Allah says in *Surah Al-e-Imran:*

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيعًا وَّلَا
تَفَرَّقُوا ۠ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

Khilafat is that rope that holds us all together and prevents us from

being divided. *Khilafat* is the rope that we must all grab on to and never let go, so that the whole world may be united under one leadership, under the one Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

My sisters, let us not waste any time. Let's begin right away to prioritize our lives so that everything we do is unified in the worship of this One Being who Created us. Only then can we fall in love with all of His creation. And only then can God grant all of us brothers and sisters world peace. Only then can God fall in love with us!

Allah Himself tells us in a *Hadith-e-Qudsi*:

"My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works (*nawafil*) until I love him.

When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it."

(*Bukhari*)

How easy it is to embrace Allah's unity and incorporate it into our lives!

I would like to leave you with some inspiring words from the last sermon of the Holy Prophet[saw]:

"O men, what I say to you, you should hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal."

While he was saying this the Prophet[saw] raised his hands and joined the fingers of the one hand with the fingers of the other and then said:

"Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers."

(*Farewell Sermon, Life of Muhammad[saw]*, p. 184)

Isn't it astounding to think that world peace can actually be within our grasp? All we need to do is unite as brothers and sisters under Allah, The One.

May Allah help everyone around the world to use the Oneness of Allah as the hope that motivates us to create harmony and world peace on this earth. May Allah help all of humanity to unite under one God, His one messenger, and one *Khalifa*. May Allah help us to find unity and world peace, by always having our hearts, our souls, cry: *Ahad, Ahad. Ameen.*

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HUMANITY FIRST

NEEDS VOLUNTEERS AND MONETARY DONATIONS

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Superstition and Ill Omen

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "No contagious disease (is conveyed to another person without Allah's permission) nor an ill omen, but I like a good omen. They asked, 'What is a good omen?' The Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'Virtuous talk (i.e., saying a good word and drawing a good conclusion from a good word).' "

(Bukhai kitabattib)

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "To take an ill omen is infidelity. There is none among us who does not get it. Only Allah removes it through trust in Him."

(Tirmidhi abwabussair)

Hadhrat Abu Hassan[ra] relates that two men belonging to the Bani 'Amir tribe came to Hadhrat 'A'ishah[ra] and said to her: "Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates from the Holy Prophet[saw] that he said, 'A house, a woman and horses are associated with misfortune.' Hearing this, she[ra] became enraged so much that one side of her flew to the sky and the other side to the earth (i.e., she was enraged to the extreme) and said, 'By Allah Who revealed the Holy Qur'an to Muhammad[saw], the Messenger of Allah never said so. Rather, he said, 'The people in the days of ignorance considered these things as ill omens.' "

(Musnad Ahmad,)

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THE BLESSINGS OF DUROOD

Tamara Rodney – Saint Louis

My Dear Sisters in Faith and Guests of this blessed event:

AsSalaamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatahu

Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah and the blessings of Allah

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ۚ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٧﴾

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe you also should invoke blessings on him and solute him with the salutation of peace.

Four thousand fifteen times, four thousand fifteen times, four thousand and fifteen times a year, 2.08 billion Muslims worldwide offer *Durood* on the Holy Prophet of Islam[saw] in their five daily prayers. We offer *Durood* because of our love of Allah, our love of the Holy Prophet[saw] and the high spiritual station, which he holds. Each time we offer *Durood* we are blessed by the utterance of these words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

Those who recite *Durood*, will in their daily, monthly and yearly invocations receive numerous blessings, a few of which are: knowing a formula for the acceptance of prayer, experiencing divine love and keeping the character of the Holy Prophet[saw] ever before them so that any efforts to malign his character are met with failure.

Before speaking on the blessings of *Durood* that I have mentioned, let us (*for the benefit of our guests*) define *Durood*. The word "*Durood*" or "*Durood Shareef*" is a Persian word, which means the "Invocation (appeal) of Blessings upon the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad[saw] (Muslim Prayer Book Glossary). "*As-salatu ala nabi*" (Wikipedia) is the Arabic equivalent of the Persian word "*Durood.*" *Durood* or *Salat-un Nabi* is performed in the sitting position (*Qa'dah*) of the final rakat of each prayer but it can also be offered at other times as well. Our beloved spiritual leader, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], asked that "*men, women, young, old and children, more than ever, should give greater attention towards Durood... and must fill their surrounding atmosphere with it*" (*Khutba*, 9/21/2012). *Durood* is deeply rooted in Islamic faith and tradition as evidenced in its mention in the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith*. When asked by his companions how to send blessings on him? The Holy Prophet[saw] taught them *Durood*

(*Sahih Bukari*, Book 60).

It is agreed and recognized that Muslims recite *Durood* often but what are the blessings of these invocations? The first and foremost blessing of *Durood* is the acceptance of prayer. In a *Hadith*, narrated by Hadhrat Umar ibn al-Khattab[ra], the Holy Prophet[saw] is reported to have said: "The prayer is stopped between Heaven and Earth and none of it ascends till you invoke blessing on your Prophet" (*Tirmidhi – Khutba* 9/5/2003). Let me pause here to remind us all that it is not just rote recitation of *Salat-un Nabi* that will result in the acceptance of prayer. Your *Durood* must be "*earnest and sincere and done with the purest of intentions.*" We shouldn't just seek the acceptance of prayers and engage in *Durood* for "personal motive and to gain reward or status" but rather we should engage in sincere and earnest *Durood* so that the light of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] will shine in this world and the Hereafter

(*Maktoobet e Ahmad* Vol 1 p. 523).

The Promised Messiah (*Imam Al -Mahdi*)[as] has reminded us that the Prophet of Islam[saw] is not "in need" of *Durood*/invocations. Thus *Durood* or *Salat-un Nabi* on the Holy Prophet[saw], is not offered because we believe he needs these invocations but rather because we believe with certainty that the more we perform *Salat-un Nabi* or *Durood* is the more our **divine love** grows. Thus another blessing of *Durood* is the experience of divine love. The Promised Messiah and *Imam Al-Mahdhi*[as] further teaches us, that there are three spiritual levels of divine love and nearness to Allah (*Elucidation of*

Objectives, p.22). Imagine Divine love as "flames of a fire:"

In the first level, the "Fire of Divine love" warms the heart so much that the love for Allah, in the human heart, kindles into a new fire, however that newly kindled fire lacks the radiance of the "Fire of Divine Love."

The second level is where the "Fire of Divine Love" kindles the love of Allah in the human heart into a fire that is shining bright, however the flames of the new fire are soft and gentle rather than fiery and blazing.

The 3rd and most transformative level is where the Promised Messiah and *Imam Al-Mahdi*[as] is quoted as saying: "*The blazing flames of Divine love fall on the inflammable wick of human love and set it afire, enveloping it in all its parts and ramifications, and transforming it into its complete and perfect manifestation.*" (*Elucidation of Objectives*)

Thus offering *Durood* on the Holy Prophet[saw] means that one recognizes him "*as the last point, on the higher scale... of God's creation and [knows that he reached] the absolute pinnacle of all spiritual heights*"

(*Elucidation of Objectives*, p. 24).

He was the beloved of God. The more we offer Durood on him, the closer we come to the "***transformative level***" of divine love that can be describes as nothing other than a "*blazing flame that sets our hearts afire.*" This experience with divine love, because of our love for Allah's beloved, is a sure blessing of *Durood.*

In his book, the "Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam" the Promised Messiah[as] writes about "*a natural condition of mankind*" which is "*the search for the Exalted Being.*" When I first read this term I was able to immediately identify with it. Today we see it in the world around us. People are obsessed with celebrities. Our children display it with their multiple screens. They will set a desktop or wallpaper image that they look at everyday. I've observed students who stare at the celebrity, who has become their exalted being, so often that they begin to take on that person characteristics in every way. By offering *Salat-un Nabi* we keep the character and person of the Holy Prophet[saw] before us many times as we are able to in one day, the minimum being 15 times. As we recite each word "earnestly and sincerely" his character is held up before us much the same way that our children's screens are held up before them... and we begin to take on his attributes. If men, women, and children increase their attention toward Durood and fill their surrounding atmospheres with it, then the efforts of those who seek to malign the Prophet Muhammad[saw] will meet zero success and end in failure every time. The blessing of *Durood* is that we keep the character of the Holy Prophet[saw] so often before us that we can present the world with living examples of Islam's practice and the model traits of it's Prophet[saw] ... in our own actions.

As we intensify our offerings of *Durood*, we draw closer to the Holy Prophet[saw]; we understand his mission; we understand his message; and we understand his practice. As we intensify our offerings of *Durood* we draw closer to Divine love because we intensify our love of Allah's beloved. As we intensify our offerings of *Durood* we become the true believers who increase in faith and understanding and - who - will see those blessings returned to us. The Promised Messiah and *Imam Al-Mahdi*[as] said in his commentary of *Al -Qasidah* (An Arabic Poem he wrote extolling the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad[saw]):

I recall that one night I sent Durood in such magnitude that my heart and soul became fragrant therewith. The same night I saw in a dream that people were carrying into my house water-skins filled with divine light in the form of water and one of them said that 'these are the blessings that you sent on Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.'

(Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, part 4, *Ruhani Khaza'in,* Vol. 1, p. 597–598, Sub-footnote no.3*)"*

In closing, *Durood* is really for our benefit, for our spiritual improvement. As we look for opportunities to "*fill [our] surrounding atmospheres with it,*" let us reflect upon these words and utter them in earnest sincerity: *Ameen*

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

Bless O Allah, Muhammad and the people of Muhammad as You did bless Abraham and the people of Abraham. You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

HADHRAT AMMA JAN[ra]: A BEACON OF LIGHT

Zuna Ahmad – Silver Spring

There is no doubt that Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] was the first fulfillment of Allah's promise granting the Promised Messaih[as] "*khawateen-e-mubarika*" or "blessed ladies" among his followers. In fact, Hadhrat *Amma Jan's*[ra] life had been Divinely decreed centuries earlier when the Holy Prophet of Islam[saw] prophesied that the Messiah of the Latter Days would marry and have children. The Promised Messiah[as] explained the meaning of this prophecy: for prophets commonly married and had children. This emphasis on the Messiah's wife and children indicated their special significance on his life and mission.

Allah Almighty intimated *Amma Jan's*[ra] worth to the Promised Messaih[as] in these words: ***Ushkur Ni'mati Ra'ita Khadijati***, meaning: *Be grateful for My Bounty, you have seen my Khadija*

(*Ruhani Khaza"in*, vol. 1, p. 666)

This young bride of eighteen was to show many of the qualities of that great lady, Hadhrat Khadija[ra], during the course of her long life: as a devoted wife, mother *and* mother of the faithful. Her virtuous example is truly a beacon of light illuminating a life motivated to win the pleasure of Allah: a life of honesty, simplicity, sacrifice and unwavering faith.

Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] was born in 1865 to Mir Nasir Nawwab Sahib[ra] and Sayyeda Begum[ra], a pious Syed family of Delhi. Her father named her "Syedah Nusrat Jahan," meaning "helper of the world." He recalled that since his daughter was born there was never a *Namaz* in which he didn't pray: *O Allah Almighty, whichever man is most agreeable and suitable in YOUR eyes, make my daughter's marriage tie with him."* Allah accepted this prayer in ways her father could not have imagined: she was chosen to be the life partner of the *Imam* of the Age.

The focus of *Amma Jan's*[ra] life was winning the pleasure of Allah through all her actions and especially her worship. Along with the responsibilities of running a full household, raising children, tending regularly to the needy, and meeting ladies of the *Jama'at, Amma Jan*[ra] also had to attend to the constant stream of visitors to Qadian. She never let these demands deter her from meticulously observing the five daily prayers.

Not only was she vigilant in observing *Salat* properly and on time, but those who observed her in *Salat* said, it was as if she were melting at the feet of her Creator. So fervent was her supplication; it seemed that nothing else existed around her. Such emersion in worship inspired onlookers to engage in *true Salat* as well.

An awe-inspiring example of the precedence she gave to *Salat* was at the illness of he first son, Bashir "*awwal*" whom *Amma Jan*[ra] and the Promised Messiah[as] had hoped would be the foretold "promised son." Along with the natural feeling of a mother for her child, the demise of this child would give opponents cause to taunt the prophecy. The infant was critically ill; most mothers would not think to leave the bedside of their child at such a moment, but when the time came for prayer, *Amma Jan*[ra] got up and performed her ablution and offered her *Salat*. After concluding her prayer, she asked about her son's condition and was told that he had passed away. She exclaimed, "we belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return." There was no loud expression of grief. She had resigned herself immediately to the will of her beloved Allah.

Once a lady took her baby daughter to meet Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] and to request prayers. It was the time for *Salat*; when *Amma Jan*[ra] returned from saying her prayers, she asked, "Girls, have you offered your prayers?" The lady replied, " My child has wet herself, so I will say my prayers at home." *Amma Jan*[ra] corrected her. "Don't use the child as an excuse to miss your prayer. In this way, children can become a way of arousing God's anger. Whereas a child is a gift from God."

So highly did *Amma Jan*[ra] value the *Salat*, that during those days of the month when women are exempt from *Namaaz*, she would sit and pray in her own words. Women often take this time to attend to other chores or as "time off" from prayer; however *Amma Jan*[ra] viewed this break in *Salat* as a deprivation.

Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] was profuse in her recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Whenever she was troubled, she would recite the Holy Book. She wanted to instill this love and importance of the Qur'an in others. On the occasion of a marriage she would often give the bride a copy of the Holy Qur'an as a gift.

The habit of *dhikr* in her daily routine exemplified how a true believer fulfills the obligations of this world, while her heart is really attuned to the Divine. As she attended to other tasks, her tongue and heart were busy in the remembrance of Allah. Her children used to say how, as she would put a morsel of food in their mouth, she would offer up a prayer.

Her love for the Holy Prophet[saw] was such that she actively sought out opportunities to follow his noble example. A well-known practice of the Holy Prophet[saw] was the feeding of prisoners. Dr. Hashmat Ullah Khan Sahib[ra] relates that once *Amma Jan*[ra] travelled to Batala and asked how she could get permission to feed the prisoners in jail. Dr. Sahib was able to arrange this through an acquaintance and *Amma Jan*[ra] gave money so that an excellent meal was prepared. Many of us may think: well the *sunnah* of feeding of prisoners was possible in the time of the Holy Prophet[saw], but such a thing is really not "practical" in this day and age. However, *Amma Jan's*[ra] actions show us that if we make an active effort, it is possible to emulate the high example of our Holy Prophet[saw].

Her youngest son, Sahibzada Mirza Sharif Ahmad[ra] enjoyed hunting since childhood. Hakeem Abdul Aziz Khan Sahib[ra], who was also an avid hunter, would often take Mian Sharif Ahmad[ra] along. Once, in the month of May, Hakeem Sahib told Mian Sharif Ahmad[ra] to go get his gun. Mian Sharif Ahmad[ra] returned empty-handed saying, "*Amma Jan*[ra] does not want to give the gun." On hearing this, Hakeem Sahib sent a message asking for the gun. *Amma Jan*[ra] replied firmly, "At this time of year, birds sit on their eggs. I have children too; I will never give the gun in these days." How beautifully *Amma Jan*[ra] taught kindness to God's creatures.

Her lifelong care for the orphan and the needy also followed the example of Hadhrat Muhammad *Rasulullah*[saw]. Her household often included orphan girls whose care and training *Amma Jan*[ra] undertook herself. Once, as she was taking her customary walk she saw a girl in dirty rags, eating discarded melon. She asked about the child and was told that the girl was an orphan and a deaf mute. *Amma Jan*[ra] took the girl directly to the girls' school in Qadian. The poor girl's appearance was so frightening that the other girls ran away screaming, but *Amma Jan*[ra] only laughed at their reaction and said, "This is an orphan with no one to care for her. Her name is Hemi. It is up to you to teach her good behavior." *Amma Jan*[ra] cared for Hemi, often bathing her herself and combing her hair, as she would her own daughter. And when Hemi grew up, *Amma Jan*[ra] arranged for her marriage.

Like her spiritual predecessor Hadhrat Khadija[ra], *Amma Jan*[ra] showed exemplary moral qualities and devotion to her husband and his Divinely ordained mission. At the time of her marriage, she accepted to be married simply and without fanfare, even though the urbane culture of Delhi society favored ostentatious spending, ritual, and display. This blessed couple were friends and true companions to one another. People, who observed them closely, including their children, vouched that in 24 years of marriage there was never a raised voice let alone an argument between them.

My dear sisters, do you think that all was smooth in their life? It was a marriage tested by opposition from the Promised Messiah's[as] own family, alongside this was worldly opposition from opponents of his mission, then there was material hardship and health issues; add to all this the tragic loss of five children. In the face of all these challenges this husband and wife were a model of love and support for one another.

Her virtue was highlighted to the Promised Messiah[as] in a dream in which Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] remarked, *"For the sake of Allah Almighty's Will I have forsaken my own will."* To this the Promised Messiah replied in the dream, *"Because of this you have been embellished with beauty."* This concise dream captures the essence of Hadhrat *Amma Jan's*[ra] life. She had resigned her will to winning Allah's Pleasure and to serving His Creation, so she was to be endowed with a heavenly beauty. It was this beauty that the Promised Messiah[as] cherished in his wife.

Hadhrat *Amman Jan*[ra] was deeply influenced by her husband's Godliness and purity. She was at the forefront of making financial sacrifices for the *Jama'at.* When the Promised Messiah[as] made an appeal to raise funds for the building of *Minara-tul Masih, Amma Jan*[ra] (responded by selling the property of her inheritance in Delhi. She gave 1000 rupees for this noble cause, excelling others in fulfilling this appeal.

In keeping with the title that Allah conferred upon her of "*Khadija," Amma Jan's*[ra] personal sacrifices in support of her husband are numerous. They shed light on the fact, that although her own inheritance could have allowed her a life of greater ease and comfort, instead, she chose personal hardship in order to spend in the way of Allah.

As the wife of the *Imam* of the Age, Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] truly exemplified her role as *Ummul Momineen* or Mother of the Faithful. As her own children lovingly addressed her as "*Amma Jan*" " Dear Mother," so did the whole *Jama'at.* Her daughter Hadhrat Nawwab Mubarika Begum Sahiba[ra] recalls that once *Amma Jan*[ra] was weeping so profusely in *Salat* that she got worried until she heard *Amma Jan*[ra] say audibly, "grant my Nayyar a son." She was praying for Abdur Rahim Sahib Nayyar who was the first Ahmadi Missionary to Africa. And God gave her Nayyar *two* sons. *Amma Jan*[ra] was praying for him as if for her own child, showing how highly she regarded her bond with her *Jama'at.*

It was her routine to go walking daily. This was for physical exercise, and a way in which she tended to the needs of the *Jama'at.* She would visit families, asking about their wellbeing in a cheerful manner. She would listen to their problems and tend to the sick, often preparing remedies with her own hands, and she would pray for them. She would show ladies how to make their homes both efficient and attractive. Hadhrat *Amma Jan's*[ra] training can be seen in many Ahmadi households to this day.

As Ahmadi mothers we worry about the correct training of our children; *Amma Jan's*[ra] method can be our beacon of light. At *Jalsa Salana* Indonesia 2002, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] addressed the *Lajna* saying that a good method for the successful moral training of our children would be to follow the excellent example of Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra]. He stated; *"If you wish to save your children from evil influences then follow the pure example of Hazrat Amman Jan*[ra]*. This prescription is without fail; and whoever follows it will be successful."*

("Sirato Sawaneh Hadhrat Amman Jan" Prof. S. N. Saeed, p. 584)

Hazoor cited three basic aspects of *Amma Jan's*[ra] training:

- ***Develop a repulsion for deceit**
- ***Inspire confidence** and self respect so that the child knows he/ she has your trust and *most important of all*
- ***Prayer** (pray for your children and try to inculcate this habit in them).

Amma Jan[ra] was firmly against nagging as expressed in her wise words, *"Do not say to a child "listen" all the time, but then when you do say it, enforce what you say so the child develops the habit of obedience. However, do not bother him all the time."*

("Sirato Sawaneh Hadrat Amman Jan" Misbah, December 1961-January 1962) In other words: pick your battles wisely and stay consistent.

To encapsulate Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra] in these few minutes has been like trying to capture the sea inside a bottle. The depth of her righteousness and breadth of her noble qualities is *that* vast. And although narrating aspects of such an exemplary life is important, its real value lies in the motivation it gives us to raise our own conduct each and every day.

Can we follow the example of the Khadija of our age? By putting *Salat* first, even before our children? Can we actively seek out ways to emulate the *Sunnah* of Hadhrat Muhammad *Rasullullah*[saw]? Can we forego our own desires for the sake of winning Allah's pleasure? And can our compassion as well as our respect extend to all, no matter their status? *Amma Jan's*[ra] life shows us the way.

Let us take this beacon of light into our hearts and let it guide the acts of our daily existence. Then she is not only Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra], but ***our*** Hadhrat *Amma Jan*[ra]. Then and only then, we become her real daughters, her real progeny, her spiritual progeny, *Insha'Allah. Ameen.*

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WALKING THE FINE LINE

Rizwana Haneef - Willingboro

Audhu billah hi minashaytan irajeem
Bismillah hi Rahman ar Rahaeem

I would like to begin, by relaying to you some extracts from a letter. This letter was written on May 16, 1939, in Shimla, Pakistan (almost 75 years ago). It begins:

"My Dearest One,

Assalāmu 'alaikum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhū

"When we have left this world, our responsibilities will be placed on your shoulders and those of the dear ones even younger than you. Judging by the misery in this world and the speed with which it is spreading, I can guess that your responsibilities will be much greater than ours.

Right now you are going through a most sensitive phase of your life. All of us have been through such a phase in our own circumstances.

First of all, instill this point in your mind that life is an honor and a great gift from Allah. It is essential to give it much respect and deference. It is not a game. It is not an idle operation, its objective is lofty and, in achieving that objective, one attains eternal happiness and contentment."

This letter was written by Hadhrat Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra]; addressed to the youth of his time and generations to come.

I remember reading this letter when I was eighteen, right before I moved into the campus dorms to begin my first year of university- it was given to me by my parents. I remember reading it and thinking that Chau-dhry Sahib was right - our world, our society is one that is morally and spiritually degrading at an alarming rate, yet we still have to face it. We still have to find a way to thrive in it.

The topic given to me today is 'Walking the Fine Line.'

The questions that I will seek to address are the following:

What is the Islamic concept regarding the existence of a fine line between good and bad?

How do we walk that line, how do we navigate this Western society we live in, through both the good/beneficial aspects as well as the bad/negative aspects?

What tools can we use to keep our focus unwavering, our 'line' straight and true?

QUESTION ONE

When I speak of a fine line, I immediately imagine a path, heading into the far off distance towards a goal that is not yet clearly visible. We each have our own individual paths.

This path is one that narrows over time. It starts out broad and becomes finer and thinner as it goes off into the distance and approaches the goal. The prophets are those that walk the narrowest portion of the line, closest to the destination. They have abandoned any worldly concerns, and have complete, fine-tuned focus on achieving the destination.

Now we, the youth, are on a different portion of the line. We are close to the beginning- we have the widest expanse/section to navigate. As such, we have a lot of leeway; our line is not so defined. This presents both a benefit and a detriment to us. We can use that leeway to learn from small mistakes and grow, or we can err more easily and slip into complacency, veering completely away from the line.

There **is** black and white along this line- these are the major sins that we must avoid (lying, stealing, murder). But there is also beauty in that Allah's mercy and grace will cover all small faults and sins that we as human beings commit. That we, as youth, commit.

You may find yourself diverging from the line or traveling a parallel path. The key is to always seek to come back, to re-direct yourself back to that fine line. Do not lose yourself so completely that you cannot find the way back.

QUESTION TWO

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] has given Muslims a beautiful teaching to live their lives by. He taught that a true believer should always search for anything that is good and pure. He taught that wherever a Muslim comes across a word of wisdom or anything noble, he should treat it as his personal inheritance.

(World Crisis and Pathway to Peace page 141)

There is so much good in this world, put here for *our* benefit. University and young adulthood especially are a time when we are given the opportunity for self-discovery and learning. And we should take advantage of that- being surrounded by brilliant minds and new experience is a blessing. At the same time, the trend of the society around us is one that is very permissive and corrupt. The culture of drugs, drinking, and sexual immorality is very prevalent, especially within the bubble of college/university.

When I first left home to live away at university, I was quickly thrown into such an environment. That first week of college is known as 'recruitment week.' All of the fraternities and sororities on campus are actively seeking to invite the new freshman to parties, clubs, and social activities. The first night, they send members around to knock on doors and personally invite you to a house party. They put brightly colored pamphlets under your doors.

That first night, I watched my Muslim roommates decide to attend a costume party and I found myself at a crossroads. Of course, I could have justified going- as my room mates had- saying they weren't going to drink or socialize inappropriately, just attend. Instead, I made the choice early, stepping back and remembering my identity as a young Ahmadi Muslim.

On interacting and flourishing in the outside world, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] once said, 'Rather than focusing on all these negative elements (in college and university), you should be the light of attraction to other people around you. There should be something so bright within YOU that attracts other people.'

BETTER TRANSITION

The Promised Messiah[as] writes in *Kashti Nuh:*

"I do not wish to stop you from striving for worldly good, but you should not follow the ways of those who think that this present world is everything. Do not ape other nations, be proud of who you are. What is this you seek from those who are of this earth? Those who are not satisfied in their own minds, how can they give you satisfaction? The foremost thing is purity of heart; sincerity and purity must come first; after that you shall get everything. Do not fall to wondering why other people are meeting with success although they have not the slightest idea of your Most Perfect God. The answer is this...that having forsaken God, they have been put to trial in the matter of material means...the doors of worldly advancement are opened upon him; though from the spiritual point of view he is altogether destitute and naked. (*Our Teaching* pp 14 – 15)

It is easy to look around and see our peers as 'happy' and 'fulfilled.' We don't want to be the odd man out, the social pariah, or the 'boring oppressed Muslim girl.' At times we fall into the trap of thinking that our moral compass is holding us back; that if we don't partake in the social scene around us, it will somehow be a deterrent socially, and career-wise as well.

Allah *Ta'ala* has directed us towards a guiding principle in the Holy Qur'an:

'It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you like a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows and you know not' (Chapter 2, verse 217)

Essentially, we are hard-wired to gravitate towards good things. Ultimately, it comes down to choice, and the ability of our own conscience to drive us towards positive decisions.

In a Question and Answer session, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] was once asked if the human conscience is implanted by God or whether it is created by society?

His answer was that the conscience is **not** created by society but is rather, distorted by society. We are influenced by human beings and the groups of people we move among:

'Whatever may happen to one's conscience, if a man wants to seek deep into himself, man is capable of knowing himself truly and referring to his conscience- he can always come out with the correct answer. Despite the fact that he has become so corrupt in attitude that for **every action** he produces so many reasons to justify that action. If one truly goes within him and seeks the truth, he can still get to the truth despite that corrupted state.'

Simply, keep a company that has a positive outlook and a decent moral base. You can tell immediately if you are in the wrong crowd if your friends are drawing you away from your faith. In the beginning, it may be trial and error...but you have to know how to choose the people you surround yourself with, and this is a skill that will be developed over time. Look at their actions over their words. Look at the signals they put

out- our bodies are constantly sending messages whether we are aware of it or not.

Conversely, we must control our **own** behaviors and make sure that we aren't sending out the wrong signals.

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umme Makhtum[ra], a blind *Sahabi*, once came to visit the Holy Prophet[saw] while Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] and Hadhrat Mamoona[ra] were also sitting there. The Holy Prophet[saw] then requested the ladies to put on their veils. One of them said to him, 'Oh Prophet, he is blind and cannot see us.' The Holy Prophet[saw] responded, 'Are you also blind, can you not see him?' (*Tirmidhi*)

I have found that people will recognize you for who you are. The signals you send and the way you behave (extending to the way you speak, dress, walk) are received by your peers loud and clear. If you yourself behave in a dignified way, keeping your spiritual and moral integrity intact, your own company and friends will start to develop those qualities within themselves. You will be able to draw them along with you and align them to your path. They will begin to protect you. Non-Muslim colleagues have respectfully given me an empty conference room to pray in, friends have changed their own speech when noticing the lack of profanity in mine.

This is something you realize over time- our society actually values self-confidence and someone who sticks by their principles **above** someone who mindlessly follows the pack.

QUESTION 3

To conclude, I would like to highlight the tools that we as Ahmadi Muslims are given, that help us to maintain our focus and walk the line with unwavering confidence.

To this end, there is an excellent *Hadith* that clearly defines what our guiding lights should be.

The Messenger of Allah[swt] said: "Allah has set forth the following as a parable: there is a road that leads straight to the destination. On either side of the road there is a wall in which there are open doors with curtains hanging on them. From the remote end of the road, a voice calls, 'Proceed straight and do not turn aside.' Whenever someone intends to lift a curtain from the door another voice calls from above, 'Beware! Do not lift the curtain, otherwise you will be lured inside." *Tirmidhi* #76, on the authority of Nawwas ibn Sam'an)

The Prophet[saw] explained the parable by saying that the straight path is Islam, the walls are the limits imposed by Allah, the open doors are the things that he has prohibited, and the voice which calls from the end of the road is the Qur 'an.

The voice that calls from above is the conscience that Allah has gifted each human being with, to keep us on this straight path. It keeps calling to the person reminding him/her to stick to the straight path and stay away from the things disliked by Allah. The Holy Qur'an is the greatest caller, which beckons from the end of the path as a guiding voice warning us to not open any of these forbidden doors. We have no better guide than the Qur'an, and we can use it for every aspect of our lives, to serve as a kind of filter for the negative elements of our society.

Furthermore, Islam helps you set the boundaries and walk the line by giving you a day that is punctuated by prayer. If you find yourself to be confused or lost, you have five opportunities everyday for reflection, meditation, and remembrance of something much greater than yourself. That can always guide you. Petty concerns will melt away- that person didn't smile at me, I didn't get invited to this party, etc.

The key to walking the fine line is holding fast to these guiding lights and strengthening our barriers, which is the Qur'an and a strong consciousness of Allah. We are growing into adulthood and independence and are given the right to make our own choices. Yet there is a classic mistake that we young people make- we see the problem as outside of ourselves. We blame the society around us instead of looking within us and strengthening our own spirit.

Our qualities are tested on a daily basis, but the Holy Prophet[saw] once said that one *Sajdah* in this age would be worth all of the *Sajdah* in the early age because of the environment we are in: "In those days one prostration before Allah will be better than the world and what it contains" (*Bukhari*)

If we push through this environment and learn to be leaders amongst our peers, the potential reward is greater too. May Allah enable us to always remain on a path that is foremost pleasing to Him, *Ameen*.

MEETING THE MESSIAH - MY SEARCH FOR THE ONE TRUE RELIGION–ISLAM

Tahirah Lee Ahmad, LA East

I seek refuge of Allah from Satan the Accursed
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful

My Childhood

To share my journey in pursuit of a true religion, I start from my childhood.

I grew up in a somewhat Catholic but non-religious home. Generally the children went to church and most of the adults did not. My grandmother was the matriarch of the family. She insisted we go to church every Saturday and Sunday.

We were taught who Jesus was, and we studied to become familiar with other holy people in the Catholic Bible. We were taught to be like Jesus, although I had no idea what that meant. This was because I did not see anyone that was trying to be like Jesus, not even the nuns and priests. No one seemed to act on the teachings that I read in the literature.

At a young age, I can remember how confused I was as I viewed pictures of all the saintly figures. I remember asking myself: "who were they, and why was it important for me to know who they were?' These are some of the questions I can remember pondering. What stood out was the fact that we were ***not allowed*** to question any of the things we were taught!

I don't remember feeling anything special about religion at all. Nothing caught my attention like the Ten Commandments, 'thou shalt not steal' –'honor thy mother and thy father' etc. All of this especially as none of my aunts and uncles exhibited any of these honorable behaviors at home; in fact they were the complete opposites. Regardless of the behaviors I saw at home, my siblings and I continued going to church every Saturday and Sunday.

I was 10 years old when my grandmother passed away. I could not understand why someone as dear to the family as she was, had to be taken away from us all. In my opinion, she was the only one who exhibited the saintly behavior that should have been practiced by everyone.

My Youth

Things began to change as I got older. My grandfather was a devout Catholic. He went regularly to church but did not insist that we continue going to church. He was as the saying goes, "lived in the church". This phrase became more true of him after my grandmother passed away.

When I became a young adult, I began thinking about some of the lessons we had been taught in church. I did not realize then, but that became the beginning of my pursuit for the one true religion.

In the Catholic religion, whenever it was time to confess your sins, I would wonder why I had to confess my sins to someone other than GOD – if GOD is everywhere, He sees all, knows all –knows my sins even before they are committed, why do I need to tell this to someone other than GOD? I tried believing in the Catholic faith, it's what my grandmother wanted and I knew she loved me and would not ask me to participate in something if she felt it was not right. My grandfather was well known and respected in the Catholic Church, and my grandmother wanted no one doing anything to tarnish the family name. So I made, what I thought was an honest effort in my young adult life to try to learn, understand and practice the Catholic faith.

Continuing the Pursuit as an Adult

As I became older, I made new friends who introduced me to different faiths, i.e. Baptist, Methodist, etc., I would visit these different religious institutions, still trying to grasp the idea of 'three people in one'. I know GOD can do all things but why did He need to do them through Christ? And, who was the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I stumbled my way through early adult hood still not understanding what I call the basics of religion. Any church I visited, when I began asking questions, I was being told things like, 'you are being disrespectful to the Bishop, or Minister or Preacher." 'There are no answers to the types of questions you are asking, just believe, it's the right thing to do." Well just believing was what I had been attempting to do all these years; I needed something I could really believe in and understand why.

At this point in my life I was praying for a miracle. I just knew there had to be more to religion than what I had been taught. I thought perhaps there's something wrong with me -because everyone else seems to understand it and I was the odd ball –maybe I was being punished. At some point in time, I remember thinking, 'how would I recognize the truth if it were presented to me? I've been praying for the truth for so very long yet somehow I felt in my heart that what was being taught was everything but the truth. I don't know how I knew that, I just did.

Introduction to Islam- Meeting the Messiah

Continuing my quest, I met several people along the way. Some of them were religious some were not however, one of the people I met along the way said, 'have you ever been introduced to Islam?"

At this time, I had heard about Islam but vaguely –but it was the Nation of Islam. The little I knew about 'the Nation" as people referred to this organization, I did not like what I saw or heard, which was very little. It was not 'the Nation' this person was referencing, it was Ahmadiyyat, and all he said was, 'here is the address to the mosque I attend, if you stick with it long enough, I'm sure you will find the answers you have been searching for.'

Well, I had no idea what a 'Mosque' was –I mean, was it the same as a church or a temple? Are the people friendly, what if they tell me to leave? If they ask who sent me, what should I say? All of these thoughts ran through my mind. I was told to be sure to attend the 'women's side' of the mosque. Well this really rattled my mind, 'women's side?' In the church, men and women sat together –boy, this is different, I thought!

I finally got the courage to visit this so called Mosque in Chino, California.

I can remember my first visit as though it were yesterday –when actually, it has been several years now.

I have never looked back. I have received confirmation in more ways than one that this is where I belong –this is my family and I have been embraced with open arms, hearts, as well as homes from the very beginning.

Change is difficult, especially when you've been taught the complete opposite most of your life. The road has not been an easy one, but well worth the ride. I've veered off the road a few times but have always been led back. There have been times when I wanted to give up, this was more than I bargained for, but the sisters here would not allow that! They were not about to give-up on me. They were and still are willing to do whatever it takes to help me through this wondrous transition.

Meeting the Messiah – in Person!

I understood that I could not meet the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as], as he had passed away long before I was born. Yet, meeting the *Khalifa* of the Promised Messiah[as] was an exceptionally different feeling – something out of this world!!! A few years ago I had the honor of meeting His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Fifth *Khalifa* of the Promised Messiah[as]. The meeting left a lasting impression on me. With Allah's grace, the *Khalifa's* advice and prayers has enabled me to evolve in my transition. It has answered all the questions I so desperately needed to be answered. Once again, in a subtle way, confirming my faith in knowing that I was introduced to Ahmadiyyat not by accident but the Grace of Allah. *Alhamdulillah.*

I'm no longer searching for the 'one true religion' as I have met the much awaited Messiah through his Community led by his successors, the *Khalifa.* I have found it and as mentioned before, it has definitely been confirmed by the only one Who can confirm it, Allah.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my journey, may Allah continue to enable us all to grow and spread the message of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. *Ameen.*

MEETING THE MESSIAH

Hadzira Drljic - Syarcuse

I was born to a *Sunni* Muslim family in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1981. Even though my family was considering themselves as a Muslims they were not practicing most of the Islamic traditions. As a child I remember going to a *masjid* for prayers during *Ramadan* and on weekends to learn about Islamic teachings but most of my knowledge came to me from my great-grandma. She was the only one that prayed all five daily *Salats* that I can remember. Others prayed too but occasionally and didn't seem to give as much priority to it. Even as a little girl I always felt proud to be a Muslim and always strived to achieve better prayers, to learn more *Surahs*, to fast more days than my cousin and I felt proud to wear *hijab*.

When the war in Bosnia started in early 1992 I was only 11 years old. I have seen terror and suffering of people (from hunger, thirst, wounds...etc.), people killed, some of them my relatives and friends. We left our home in 1992 and never returned to it. Being exposed to all the horrible war situations in my early life, prayers never left me and only God knows why I survived to be here with you all today.

As I grew older I was getting myself engaged in prayers more frequently and I wanted to go to Islamic school "*Madrassa*", so that I can learn more about Islamic teachings and because I wanted to wear *Hijab*.

Post completion of middle school, I wanted my parents to sign me up in the Islamic school. One of the pre-requisites to enter into this program was that an individual has to know the Arabic alphabet and had to be able to recite Holy Qur'an. My parents did not support me in this program and gave me all kinds of excuses. At that time I even decided to wear *Hijab* and I wore it for couple of months, but with so much pressure from family and friends I stopped wearing *Hijab*.

However this didn't stop me from observing my five daily prayers and going to the mosque regularly. As a matter fact all this gave me more courage to become more active in the mosque and to learn Arabic so that I can recite Holy Qur'an. Being the oldest child (teenager) at the mosque on weekends, some teenagers would be shy to spend time with young kids, but I felt pleased to be there and worked so hard to learn Arabic as soon as possible.

In the mean time when I had just learned the Arabic alphabet and started my practice in reciting Holy Qur'an, my family decided to immigrate to the United States as there was no established life for us in Bosnia any more. My father was sick, didn't have a job, we lived in someone else's house and eviction from that house was approaching. The question was where to go since we didn't have a home anymore? The answer for my family was to go to the USA. It was very difficult for us to leave our relatives. I was only eighteen, my brother was twenty and my sister was thirteen years old.

Upon arrival in the United States and just seeing the life style in the area and near around in my first couple of weeks, I was afraid that I might go astray. My father being ill from lung cancer was taken to the hospital by ambulance on the third day after our arrival in Utica. We were hoping that with better medical technology doctors would be able to help him and save his life but unfortunately his lungs were pretty much taken over by cancer and it was a matter of days before he was gone. Twenty three days later he passed away in the hospital, *Inna lillahi wa inna illaihi rajiun.* Life became painful and filled with grief for my family. We were starting life from scratch in the world of a new society and without one parent. No education, no jobs, living on welfare and not speaking or understanding the English language.

Soon after the death of my father, my brother met a friend Salih at the Refugee center (where we went to learn English). Finding out that my brother also was religious but wasn't that strict about practicing Islamic teachings in full, Salih started doing *tabliqh* to my brother. Brother Salih was also a convert since two to three years prior. He accepted the Promised Messiah[as] in Bosnia. He was one of the first few Bosnians who accepted Promised Messiah[as] He also came from a so called Muslim family who barely practiced any of the Islamic traditions. Soon after he started visiting my brother at home, his preaching drew my attention as well because he

was not a scholar nor did he attend an Islamic school in Bosnia but he had so much knowledge about Islam. I always thought that only scholars can be *Imams,* and that they are the only ones to know the details about religion.

He told us that the Messiah has come.

My understanding before converting to Ahmadiyyat, was the same understanding like other Muslims, that the Promised *Imam* whom the entire Muslim world is expecting to return will return a little bit before Isa[as] descends from living in the sky (seventh level) for centuries to fix everything in a matter of hours or days. The more I listened to the Ahmadi's teachings, my previous belief about the Promised Messiah[as] became more like a children's story, sort of magical. Among Ahmadi Muslims, Islam was preached to be different than what I had experienced before and a lot like how people lived during the Holy Prophet Muhammad's[saw] time. Plus I didn't have to go to Islamic school in order to observe Hijab, which was something I always wanted to do.

It didn't take Salih a long time to convince me and my brother to accept the truth by accepting the Promised Messiah[as]. My brother and I decided to take *Bia'at* as the Promised Messiah's[as] teaching made the most sense to us and were providing answers to all the questions we had unanswered for years.

My mom along with other relatives and friends were against our decision and gossip started to circle around among people.

At that time, I did not fully understand what my responsibility was as an Ahmadi Muslim. Brother Salih kept reminding me that *Hijab* is one of the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and that I should think about it. I decided to cover my head during Ramadan and keep it on after wards.

Once you start wearing *Hijab* it obviously changes your image to others, then the real drama becomes; why did you do it? You are so pretty and young to cover up yourself, this is the 20th century, and you should take it off....etc. I have to admit, it wasn't easy; being new to this community/society, having lost my father recently and now to deal with all kinds of approaches, it was very stressful. All this was hard on me and especially when you have your family and relatives that you can't count on, it made it even more difficult.

Several months later my brother's friend Salih realized that I was not dealing well with the situation, and he offered me a proposal in marriage. It was a surprise and shock to me at first because I wanted to learn the language, get some education and get a job in order to establish a good life and I didn't believe that any of this will happen if I got married. I thought about it for a couple of weeks and realized that if I don't take this opportunity I might remove my *hijab* again (not being able to deal with the pressures).

My mom and the entire family were against this and didn't even want to talk about this subject. I felt guilty to choose either path: refuse marriage and accept the risk of getting away from the true Islamic teachings or get married and deal with my family's resistance.

I asked my brother for advice, as he was new convert too, and I prayed to God Almighty to show me the right path. My brother approved of this marriage. Our marriage started from scratch, we had nothing (of the worldly stuff), but we had Allah and each other.

My first years as an Ahmadi Muslim were somewhat exciting because I had high expectations of this *Jama'at* but unfortunately I wasn't seeing that in our local *Jama'at* or elsewhere. Cultural differences and lack of *Lajna* discipline in wearing the *hijab* pushed me away from the *Jama'at* for some time. I just didn't see myself fitting into this community and I felt like a stranger to the groups and individuals. This is sad and a very uncomfortable feeling but that's the truth and I hope that other converts didn't/aren't feeling the same, because if they are, we Ahmadis are to blame ourselves for our actions as role models. This was very difficult and I was lost in this dark period of my life.

One year later my brother got married with my sister-in-law Safeta Besirevic. Soon after that she felt the same and in seeking for truth all over again, we stepped back away from *Jama'at* for some time. We occasionally went to other mosques in Utica where other Muslims including most Bosnians went, because we felt obligated that we have to belong somewhere. Those visits were mainly from habit but it didn't fill our hearts with peace.

My sister-in-law and brother decided to attend *Jalsa* in 2006 to see if anything changed or improved. Upon their return they were so filled with happiness and they felt that this *Jalsa* – the speeches and meeting new converts was a key decision for them and that this is the right community where they should belong forever.

At that time I was not sure what had changed in their lives and what it meant to me and my family. On the incentive of my brother and his blessed wife we decided to attend *Jalsa* the following year. We also started attending meetings regularly and listening the Hazoor's *Khutbas* and got ourselves engaged in some *Jama'at* activities. *Alhamdulillah* my *Iman* has strengthened so much and with Allah's Grace there is nothing that could push me away from this *Jama'at* again. I'm so thankful to Allah Almighty for everything and most importantly for getting me back on the right path again, and guiding me to truly Meet the Messiah and his community, and for not leaving me to die in ignorance. There is a *Hadith* that states " He who dies in a condition that he has not recognized the Imam of the Age, dies a death of ignorance"

Alhamdulillah, twelve years later, my mom *accepted Bai'at* as well. I also wanted to say that my sacrifice of choosing this path (accepting the Promised Messiah[as]) and being obedient to the *Khalifa* of the time, *Amirul Mu'minin,* Allah gave me so much in return; from not having anything fourteen years ago I now can say that I have a degree, an office job and a well established work history for twelve years. I am very well respected by the people I work with for who I am. I have a decent life for my family and most importantly a healthy family and this *Jama'at.* My observance of *Hijab* was an inspiration for many other Bosnian Muslim girls in the Utica area. Fourteen years ago I was pretty much the only Bosnian Muslim girl with *Hijab* and it was very rare to see a Muslim woman with *hijab* in the Utica area.

I would like to encourage all sisters to think about our responsibilities as Ahmadi Muslims. We claim ourselves to be the best community, and we indeed have the best teaching because we accepted Promised Messiah[as] who was foretold by Prophet Muhammad[saw] so we should prove it through our actions and practices. We are the lucky ones that some of us were born Ahmadi Muslims and for some that we were lucky enough to find the true Islamic teachings by accepting the Promised Mesiah[as]. But we should also think about the number of other people who are still seeking for the truth, "crawling" to Meet the Messiah. What impressions will we leave on them as the best Muslims if we are not acting according to the teachings of Islam?

May Allah enable us all to be good Muslims, good mothers, daughters, wives and good Muslim sisters to each other so that we can be a real support to one another, especially to those among us who might be struggling with any issues? *Ameen.*

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Silver Spring Jama'at Tabligh Activity Reports: August 2014

- Visited 5 Churches, including two Spanish Churches, one Islamic Center of Maryland (ICM) and gave invitation to Jalsa Salana in Harrisburg, PA.
- Two *Khuddam* members distributed Spanish Literature in Wheaton Shopping center.
- Visited four Churches and invited Pastors and members to 66th Jalsa Salana. And sent email messages to many contacts to attend JS, USA.
- *Masha Allah Jalsa Salana* was a blessing for the members and guests. Five guest from Silver spring with Abdul Qadar Chaudhry and two Christian friend from York, PA attended *Jalsa Salana*-Guest Session. Mr. Rich Weber was very impressed by *Jalsa Salana* and wants to bring other members from his Church.
- Saw Mr. Fayeez Khillafat (Egyptian) in Middle Eastern bakery and asked him to come with his wife to Mosque. He said after *Hajj* he will visit us.
- Attended meeting of C4 (Colesville Council of Community Congregation). Sent email to 1000 Contacts and gave all members (appox. 20) Butonsville day-Blood Drive flyers. Sent them email version also, that was distributed to many Churches. In this month two copies of Holy Quran and 10 other copies of literature was distributed from BR Mosque.

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I WILL GIVE PRECEDENCE TO MY FAITH ABOVE ALL WORLDLY CONCERNS...

Saliha Malik – Sadr Lajna Imaillah USA

وَجَآءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَىٰ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ...

And from the farthest part of the town there came a man running. He said, 'O my people, follow the Messengers. (Surah Ya Sin, 36:21)

The verse I have just recited describes the coming of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as], who would come running from the distant Mosque - meaning his tireless, quick and indefatigable work and energy would act like a whirlwind to awaken sleeping mankind of the latter days and call us to follow the Messengers and to turn to God. I say he came like a whirlwind, though for many his advent has gone unnoticed, but for those who sincerely accept him their lives change so dramatically, we are often at a loss for words to express our experience. He declared:

...my function as the Promised Messiah is that I should remove the estrangement, which has taken place between God and man, and re-establish man's connection of purity and love with his Divine Master. I have been raised that I should put a stop to religious wars and lay the basis of peace, concord and fellow feeling between men, and that I should bring to light the religious truths, which have long been hidden from the mortal eye, that I may show true spirituality by dispelling the darkness of passions from before its face, that I may manifest the working of Divine powers within man by prayer or by concentration of attention and, most important of all, that I should re-establish the pure and glorious Unity of God, which is free from every mixture of shirk (joining partners with God) and which has disappeared from the face of the earth. All this will be affected not by my power, but by the Mighty Power of Him who rules the heaven and earth. (Taken from an early issue of Muslim Sunrise)

To achieve this lofty goal he wanted all his followers each and every one to make a promise that would change their lives and bring them inner peace and therefore peace to our communities and societies:

I will give precedence to my faith above all worldly concerns... Today I would like to call to mind this promise we as Ahmadis have made in our pledge of allegiance at the hands of our *Khalifa* and at the hands of the Promised Messiah[as] and therefore Allah's hands. What is the outcome in people who keep this promise? How can we make it a part of our daily lives?

Giving precedence to faith was indeed the example and message of all the Messengers of God. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

"When their Messengers came to them from before them and behind them, saying: 'Worship none but Allah, " (Holy Qur'an 41:15)

And they showed by their own example what that meant. I am always touched by the beautiful story of the Holy Prophet[saws], that while he was sleeping under a tree an opponent caught him off guard and abruptly woke him and raising his sword to strike him and kill him said, *'Who will save you now?'* And the Prophet replied calmly, **"Allah!"** The man was so taken aback that he dropped his sword and was himself caught off guard. Whereupon the Holy Prophet[saws] took up the man's sword and raised it against him saying *"Who will save you now?"* The man pleaded to be spared. But the Prophet of God said to him, "Why did you not say, **'Allah'**?" and he let him go free.

A simple but striking example from the Promised Messiah[as] might cause us to seriously reflect upon our own standards of giving precedence to faith when it is time for prayer:

The Promised Messiah[as] was very watchful of saying his prayers at the appointed time. Hadhrat Sayyidah Nusrat Jahan Begum Sahiba[ra], the blessed wife of the Promised Messiah[as], relates that Huzoor[as] said to her: 'Once, I travelled for a lawsuit. Other cases were being dealt with, while I waited under a tree outside. Since it was time for prayer, I started to offer my prayer right there. However, I began to hear my name being summoned by the court, but I

continued praying. When I completed my prayer, I noticed an attendant of the court standing next to me. As soon as I completed it, he said, 'Mirza Sahib! Congratulations, you have won the case.'

In one of his *Khutbas* a few years ago, our beloved Huzoor[aba] shared the experience of a German girl, who observed *purdah*, but her boss didn't like it and told her to take it off or she would be fired. He gave her one month to make this change. In that month she prayed to Allah her fervent prayers for His Help and Guidance. She said, Oh Allah, it is for You I wear my scarf... The end of the month came around and she went to work that day wondering what would be in store for her only to find that her boss had been transferred. Allah had made the way clear for her, because she remained steadfast.

These examples speak volumes and illustrate how giving preference to faith above worldly concerns brings Allah's Loving protection and support in ways that are unimaginable!

In fact the true meaning and purpose of Islam is to find peace in God by our own submission to His Will, to give precedence to Him over all worldly concerns. The Promised Messiah[as] helped us do that in practical terms with the **Ten Conditions of *Bai'at***, which constitute the details of our promise. It is a clear plan of self-purification and self-reformation. Mankind, left to our own judgment, does not make good decisions in the practical execution of a reliable moral code. We have to follow Allah's code, which might be very different from what our ego or habits had in mind.

The Promised Messiah[as] has explained that in order to free ourselves of the traps and domination of the ego, we have to die a thousand times. He says:

"The true meaning of *Bai'at* is actually to sell your self. The blessings and fruits associated with it are only contingent upon this stipulation. ...First and foremost you must act with absolute humility and modesty and must abandon selfishness. Subsequently you may attain a status where spiritual growth may be possible."

The Promised Messiah[as] made clear his intentions for this community, which God had unfolded to him, he said: "I want this group to stay united, holding steadfast to the *Kalimah* and in the service of Islam.... I want this *Bai'at* from the people who are ready to serve humanity and Islam in the name of Allah, who are ready to make sacrifices for this gracious cause and who have such profound love of God that this love can encircle people around them. This love should flow like a river... this love should flow like a river and should be extended to everybody and anybody who needs it. ... They should repossess the great qualities, which include love of God, repentance, piety, peacefulness, caring for humanity and working to benefit mankind" (Tehrike Ahmadiyyat, Vol 1 pages 337 – 338)

He expected such a promise to totally block or uproot bad habits, societal, environmental or even familial pressures and influences that might derail us in our purpose. However, to reach such a state of selflessness requires daily practice in surrendering our own desires and agenda in preference to Allah's Will. Though Prayers are of the utmost importance no progress is made without taking practical steps. Our beloved Haz-oor[aba] says, 'a dedicated and ongoing continuous effort is needed' (*Khutba* 8/18/14 The Merciful and Forgiving God).

Hazoor[aba] recounts how the Promised Messiah[as] explained that the first step in the process of personal change is to change one's inner dialogue. Thoughts precede actions. If we say, *I will give precedence to my faith...* in the face of indecision it is likely that our actions will be redirected also.

We have to change our mindset, the way we think, the way we approach our day to day lives. These latter days - are characterized by people's engrossment in material gains, worldly achievements and pleasures. In fact this is one of the signs of the Promised Messiah[as]. On the one hand our material progress is galloping at an ever increasing pace and startling our eyes and minds daily with new attractions. Things have become very convenient and available. However, all that availability of 'things' cannot do the real work – the inner work - and in fact keeps distracting us and pulling us away from the true purpose of our lives – to live immersed in God's company, giving preference to Him.

Furthermore, Hazoor[aba] explains that a small bad habit leads to greater sins, (refer to Aspects of Self-Reformation, 12/13/13). Conversely, when we resolve to make one improvement, Allah strengthens us with motivation and grants us progress in other ways as well.

And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways. (29:70)

In his book Conditions of *Bai'at*, our beloved Hazoor[aba] explains: "Allah will strengthen our faith to such an extent that that ourselves, our ambitions, and our children will appear insignificant in comparison to our faith. So when everything is purely for Allah the Almighty, and nothing will be considered our own possession, then Allah will not let us go to waste. He guards the honor, protects the children and puts His blessing on such people. He enlarges their possessions, always keeps them wrapped in His Mercy and Favor, and removes all their fears." (Conditions of *Bai'at* pg. 140, by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad)

"Nay whoever submits himself completely to Allah, while he is excellent in conduct, shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve." (2:113)

Whatever our weaknesses in practice of faith or conduct, let us attack them with this mindfulness, and not allow ourselves any excuses. If we have a difficulty in getting up for *Fajr* prayer, for example, first make that promise to give preference to faith, pray fervently for Allah's help *and* take all the necessary practical steps to achieve this change. When you prefer Allah over sleep, not only will getting up for *Fajr* every day become easy but you will find the strength and resolve to offer *Tahujjud* prayer as well. Similarly, wearing the scarf only to the mosque can evolve into full observance of purdah, including at college or work, because you have chosen to prefer Allah over worldly pressures. With this promise on our minds, we can also overcome any shortfall we might have in listening to Hazoor's *Khutba* every week and in following his guidance, *Insha Allah.*

The Promised Messiah[as] says: "The reality of Islam is to present one's neck to God like the sacrificial lamb: to give up one's own designs and to be devoted to the designs of God and His pleasure; to lose oneself in God and to impose a type of death upon oneself; to be dyed in the personal love of God and to obey Him entirely for the sake of that love; to obtain eyes that see only through Him, and to obtain ears that hear only through Him, and to develop a heart that should be wholly devoted to Him, and to obtain a tongue which would speak only at His command. This is the stage where all search ends; human faculties complete their functions and man's ego dies completely. Thereupon Divine Mercy confers a new life upon the seeker through His living words and His shining light. He is honored with the delightful converse of God and a fine light, which is not discoverable by reason and is not recognizable by the eyes, approaches close to his heart; as is said by God, "We are closer to him than his jugular vein"." (50:17) (*Essence of Islam*, Vol. 1 p. 14)

Promised Messiah[as] calls us to God saying: "Relevant to a proper observance of my teaching it is essential that one should firmly believe that there is an all-Powerful, all-Sustaining Supreme Being, the Creator of everything. Changeless, Everlasting and Eternal. .... With every progressive effort on the part of man, God shows Himself with higher and more powerful manifestation. He displays an extraordinary manifestation of His power and glory, only when man shows an extraordinary change in himself...

Belief in this God, with these powers, is the foremost essential condition of our Community. Inculcate this belief in your hearts, giving to its implications and requirements the first and top most priority over all considerations of self, over its comforts and relationships. By means of actions in your daily life, with unflinching courage show a steadfast loyalty in His way. Others in this world do not give Him preference over material means and the support they hope to get from their friends and relations. But do you give Him the first place, so that in heaven you should come to be reckoned His People". ('*Our Teaching*' by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as])

At the end let us fill our hearts with Hazoor's[aba] prayer for all Ahmadis. He said: "O Allah! Forgive our mistakes, conceal our shortcomings, count us always among those who are obedient and faithful to You. Make us hold fast to the pledge of allegiance. Include us among those whom You love. Enable our future generations also to remain true to the pledge. May we never distance ourselves from You. Grant us Your true recognition. O Most Merciful of all mercifuls, have mercy upon us. Accept all our supplications. Make us the inheritors of all the prayers that the Promised Messiah[as] made for those who join his *Jama'at."* (Conditions of *Bai'at,* pg 74)

LOVE FOR MANKIND

Laila Johnson, Phoenix, AZ

A spiritual weekend in a holy city—I was blessed to attend this year's, 2014, international UK Jalsa. An event unlike any other I have attended; for this event was a gathering of the righteous, as I was humbled to be in the presence of the kings, the queens, princes, and princesses of Ahmadiyya Islam. With my eyes wide, heart sound, I was in awe of the various servants of God—the submissive souls that flooded the city with smiling hearts and lowered gazes.

Upon arriving at the *Jalsa*, I was happy to see the motherly queen of a sisterly princess I have known for some few years now. With grace in step, she immediately showed me around the premises of where I would be staying, though this was not a required duty of hers. Happily, I discovered I would be staying in the same room as her daughter—a young queen in training. In the room with this righteous child of hers, I would sleep, using her moving about in the morning as my alarm clock to rise before the dawn to give praise to the Glorious God who had so graciously placed me in familiar territory. May the rising blessings of Allah be upon her for unknowingly being my peaceful alarm clock that did not stun me awake, but instead gently pulled me out of my comforting sheets; and may these blessings meet her mother, and then back to her again, and so on, and so forth, that the blessings eternally bounce between the two. *Ameen.* This was only the beginning of my journey, and my encounters with the servants of God Almighty did not stop here.

I watched as a young, tall and upright, noble queen spent many sleepless nights organizing and catering to a group of one hundred chosen, American delegates—her ears attentive to every request, as people called on her from left and right. I watched her eyes tire, her mind weaken through her many days of service, but her heart always open to assist again. I observed her dedication in amazement to discover her mother lay seriously ill in a town far, far away. Astonishing it was to see her sacrifice her time and family to serve the community. May the Healing Hand of The Ever Merciful Lord heal her mother, and bless her and her family for eternity. What a beauty it was to watch her, with humility in heart, as she walked alongside her noble brother, and beautiful sisters from marriage, and marriage to this community of God.

Oh! and her sisters of grace—the kind hearted princesses of the world—the warm spirited queens of Islam, with tongues like honey, dripping with sweet words and compassion for their fellow man. May peace forever be upon her honored sisters, and may this world, and the next, reflect their love, returning it to them in a glowing form. For truly they were a sight to see—a heart to meet!

During a night I found myself unable to sleep, I followed the happy voices echoing through the hallways to find the sisters of joy—the elder queens who filled the night with laughter. I witnessed, amongst their mist, a love of sisterhood that The God of Time had given to this group of lovely ladies, many of which had known one another since their youth. I learned of their early days of entering into the wondrous community of Ahmadiyya, listening to their stories of bravery and heroism. My voice silent, ears open, heart at ease, as the queen of poetry and song sang me a lullaby, the words of her melody so soothing to the soul, while addressing intellectual issues. I stayed awake absorbing in their laughter that filled the late hours of the night with light, bringing a smile to the start of my day. All was welcoming—all was happiness that they sent my way.

On several occasions, I had the invariable Hand of Fate place me in the presence of the queen of the USA—leader of all the American Ahmadi women, young and old alike. Though leader to such a vast country, it was not to my surprise that through her humility in voice and in action, one would not easily realize they were sitting beside an honored woman of God. In fact, in one circumstance, two gentle tempered Spaniards did not recognize her when she sat at the dining table amongst them, though they had heard of her, and were aware of her presence at the *Jalsa*. But lo! my

eyes were not fools to her elevated station in the Lord's bountiful Kingdom of Heaven on Earth; and I pray for her health, happiness, and well being, as do I wish the Hand of Fate place us in one another's path again; for it truly is a blessing to be in her presence, and learn from her soft-hearted grace.

Out of all the blessings and miracles that filled the space in my trip, there is one that my mind and memory tells me I shall never forget. The meeting of the princess, my sweet Amirah. In order to properly tell this miraculous circumstance, I must first familiarize you with a few events prior to my attending the *Jalsa.* A few months before my journey to London, I lost a dear family member, my brother Ibrahim, who died suddenly, and unexpectedly at the age of twenty three (May peace and blessings rain upon his soul, may the Eternal Lord bring ease to his heart, and may he rest in the Garden of Light forever). Shortly after his passing, I was informed that another member of the Ahmadiyya community had lost his life, as God had taken his soul at such a young age as well. I knew not much other than he and his family resided on the east coast of America, and I and my family on the west.

During my stay in London, I met a young princess by the name of Amirah (Oh, the irony for those who know the Arabic meaning of her name!), and I took to her like a sister, and she to I. As the days of the *Jalsa* went by, except for a few lost moments here or there, the two of us were quite inseparable. It was not until the end of my weekend, by force of circumstance, did I reservedly reveal to her the recent death in my family, only to find that she, like I, had lost a brother in the recent months too. Her brother had been the young man I had heard of on the east, and my brother the young man on the west. Stunned to discover that of the thirty thousand plus people who attended the *Jalsa* UK, God The Guider drew us to one another—and I held back tears as I hugged her in my arms; for the Gracious God was kind to us in a way I could never have fathomed. May He, in His Mercy, forever bless this young princess of His with a life of prosperity, may He provide patience and ease of mind to her family during these trying times, and may her brother rest in The House of the Lord along with my brother for all of time. *Ameen.*

From the young queen from Queens, New York, to the princes in training to be the Imams of the age, practicing in service like the many traveling kings of Ahmadiyya I was so fortunate to have met, to the soft hearted queen that holds the children of the world dear to her heart, expressing her concern and desire to cure a falling educational system in America by providing proper teaching to the youth, to the princess that desires to be married, but keeps steadfast to her beliefs, waiting for Allah's grace to bestow her with a righteous husband, and to my sister of the faith that has recently committed to a marriage, letting go of slight apprehensions, and holding firm to her faith in Allah by following the Islamic junction that marriage is half of faith—these women, the true women of the world, walk with a caring, compassionate, steadfast, and faithful heart like I have never seen in women outside of this honored community of Ahmadiyya Islam. These queens, humble in spirit, are the true queens of the present era, and heirs to The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, and forever will be, *Insha Allah,* if God so wills.

My writing would not be complete if I did not emphasize my praise more on the young princes of *Jamia*—the young men in training to be Ahmadiyya's future *Imams.* Their service to the guests that stayed amongst them was not like any mere servant, but their drive was more like that of the simple slaves of the past without the agony of being forced to serve. Every need was met, and those needs not known or requested were pre-thought of and catered to. May Allah bless their strive, and place them always amongst the righteous in this world, and in the next. And a special prayer to the young man who went above and beyond to relieve me of my mild illness, as he worried to find me lemons at my requests. When unable to do so, he seemed distraught, and sometime later, I had discovered he did not surrender his search like I had thought so, but instead, he had hunted down the next best thing to cure my cold: Lemon and ginger tea. Daily he brought me this tea, inquiring about my health as though I had a serious and detrimental sickness. The earnestness in his worry and concern was eye-watering to see. May Allah bless his every step, and may the world serve him as he served me and his community of guests.

And a warm prayer of love,

tenderness, and appreciation goes out to my husband and I's new friend, a servant of the *Jama'at*, a student at *Jamia*, and a king already in my eyes, who sacrificed his time with his wife and family to give us a tour of London. My last night was spent under the city lights, as they masked the luminous stars of the sky, hands locked with my husband's, following in the path of this young and noble king, while he showed us the city he holds dear to his heart. Dreams, honesty, comparisons, and companionship were shared while we smiled and laughed through the night to meet the predawn. I watched in humility as my husband, a young king of Ahmadiyya, new to its teachings, and this noble warrior of Islam walked, side by side, like righteous lights brightening up the night. And thus, a wholehearted prayer goes out to my new friend that I shall always hold dear to my heart—may God The Almighty strengthen his strive, bless his wife and expected child, and place him amongst the most elite that are forever cradled in His Mercy. And may he rise up to be an even greater king than I forsee him to be, and may his offspring forever follow in his path—the path of Allah's Enlightening Light. *Ameen*; for he truly was an exceptional being.

Last, but certainly not least, was my encounters with the holiest of the holy that walk amongst us—the upright—noblest of the noble—the honorable—the true king of the kings on earth, and Allah's beloved, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba],. On many an occasion, I had been blessed to stand before his holiness—man of grace and might—humility and power—kindness and compassion—humor and firmness. Hazoor—man of nobility beyond that of any of our fellow men that wander the earth. A man with a message of peace and hope. A man with a mission to bring prosperity to the people. A man of selfless desires. A man with a cause greater than the greatest of causes. A man that drives my eyes dizzy in awe, for he is a walking image of Allah's true beauty—a reflection of the Gorgeous God's Eternal Light—a celestial human in all form. Through observing, seeing, and speaking to him, I can only fall more in love with him and his wise masters and teachers, the Promised Messiah and the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon them both). When in the presence of such a perfect being, I cannot even begin to imagine how the Lord of the worlds has shaped such beauty into one soul, and tears fill my eyes as I imagine what it would be like to live amongst the prophets of the past—to imagine living amongst the holiest of prophet's, Muhammad[saw]. Tears fill my eyes when I imagine standing before the Mahdi, and Messiah of the age, Hadhrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad[as] What a humbling honor it is to give my peace before the *Khalifa* of the time, and I only pray, that I, like this righteous *Khalifa,* continue the mission of the noble prophets of the past—I only pray that we all carry out such an honorable task.

And when asked how the events of *Jalsa* had effected my soul, I could only tell my beloved Hazoor, that I simply fell in love. I fell in love with the kings and queens of Islam. I fell in love with the princesses and princes of Ahmadiyya. I fell in love with every man, woman, and child that I was honored to find—I fell in love with all of mankind.

But in the end, surely all love and praise is due to the Glorious Creator of this magnificent creation; for in His likeness, man was created, and all of man, interrelated. The Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth all belong to Him. For truly, in the end, He is the King of all kings.

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ZION JAMA'AT ACTIVITIES

Alhamdulillah Zion *Jama'at/ Majalis* held several successful events over the last 2 weeks. On the 23rd we held the 14th annual Love For All Hatred For None 3 on 3 Tournament at Hermon Park in Zion, IL. There were an estimated 150 attendees including players, parents and volunteers in attendance. In attendance was Township Supervisor Cheri Ditzig, Park District Director Marilyn Krieger, Park District Manager David Osborne and Police Sgt.Tim Bartlett.

On the 30th Zion *Jama'at* members promoted the blood drive for the following day and engaged patrons in *Tabligh* at the 7 mile fair in Caledonia. On the 31st Zion *Jama'at* members cohosted a Muslims For Life blood drive at the 7 mile fair and collected 29 bags of blood. On the 1st of Sept. Zion *Jama'at* members participated in the Zion Labor Day Jubilee Parade attended by over 10,000 parade goers.

THE BEST WAY TO AVOID BACKBITING IS -- PRAYER

Anees Ahmad Nafees

Translated By: Arifa Haleem

In the Holy Qur'an God Almighty says about backbiting:

"O, ye who believe! Avoid most of suspicions for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not, nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? Certainly you would loathe it. And fear Allah, Surely, Allah is oft-Returning with compassion, and is Merciful."

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates, that the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

"Once Hadhrat Jesus[as] saw a person stealing something and asked him, do you steal? Then swearing by God that person said, "I have not stolen anything. Hadhrat Jesus[as] said, I believe your swearing and disprove myself."

"In another tradition there is a word "*Ainy*" i.e., I disprove my eyes"

(Hadiqatus Saleheen.p.659)

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar[ra] narrates that once the Holy Prophet[saw] while standing on the pulpit said loudly:

"O people, some of you are Muslims but their hearts are still not firm in belief. I warn them that neither they should tease the Muslims by sarcastic utterances nor go on spying on them to find out their imperfections, otherwise they should keep it in mind that a person who is in pursuit of other people's faults, God Almighty disgraces such a person by revealing his hidden faults to others."

(*Hadiqatus Saleheen* p.705)

"Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, do you know what backbiting is?

The Companions said, God Almighty and His Messenger [saw] know better. He said, to talk about one's brother in his absence in such a manner that he would not like. It was asked, what if that is true and he has got that fault, even then will it be backbiting? He said, if he has got that fault about which you have mentioned in his absence, it is backbiting and whatever you have said about him is not present in him, and then you have slandered him."

(*Hadiqatus Saleheen* p. 700)

"Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates that the Holy prophet [saw] said, He is the worst person who has got two faces. When he comes to them says something else, and when he goes to others says something else. Actually he is a big hypocrite and malicious gossiper."

(Hadiqatus Saleheen p. 820)

There is a tradition which provides the best solution to avoid backbiting:

"Abu Kathir narrates that I went to my master Uqba[ra] and told him that our neighbors are drinking wine. Uqba[ra] said, ignore it. Then I went to him again and said should I not call the police? Uqba[ra] said it is bad on your part, I have already said let it go because I have heard it from the Holy Prophet[saw] whoever noticed any weakness of another person and covered it, then it is equivalent to dig out an alive buried girl and save her life."

(*Hadiqatus Saleheen* p.658)

There is another method to avoid backbiting that before raising finger towards another person one should critically analyze one's own faults. By doing so he will refrain from backbiting because he will be observing only his own faults and in this way he will go on correcting them.

"Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, man can see even very minor faults in others but forgets about the major ones of his own."

(*Hadiqatus Saleheen* p.706)

The Promised Messiah[as] says:

إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

"Suspicion is such a bad disease

which blinds a man and throws him in the dark well of death. It is suspicion which made man to worship a dead man. It is the suspicion which disconnects a man from God's attributes of being Polite, Merciful, Sustainer etc. and God forbid makes him a disabled individual and a waste item. So in short not only a big part of the Hell but whole of the Hell will be filled with such people and it is not an exaggeration. Those people who are suspicious about the *Mamurs* of God, they look down upon the blessings and favors of God."

(*Tafseer Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood*[as] Vol.4th p. 217)

A mystic had got two disciples. One of them drank wine and fell down unconscious into a drain. The other one complained to the mystic. He said you are very disrespectful because you complain about him but why do not you go there and pick him up. He immediately went there and picked him up. One of them was heavily drunk but the other was lightly drunk so the later one was carrying him. The meaning of mystic was why did you backbite your own brother. The Holy Prophet[saw] was asked about backbiting. He said, to say something true about someone in his absence and to say it in such a manner that when present he would dislike, this is called backbiting and if whatever you say about him in his absence is not true then you are slandering him. In *Surah Al-Hujurat* God Almighty says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ ۫ اِنَّ
بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ
بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا ؕ اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ
اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ ؕ

"Backbiting has been considered equivalent to eating the flesh of a brother and this verse also proves that backbiters definitely exist among people. If this is not the case then this verse becomes meaning less. If the Believers had to be so much pious and no evil could be committed by them, then what was the need of this verse? The fact is that community is still in initial stage, some people are weak .Some are recovering after severe disease. Some of them have regained strength. So if someone has been found spiritually weak, he should be confidentially advised .If he does not accept advice then there should be supplication for him .If both the things do not work then it should be considered a matter of fate and destiny. When God Almighty has accepted these people then you should not be excited by finding faults in others. The possibility is there that he might be reformed. When some one's child is bad, then he tries his best to reform him. In the same way one should not abandon one's any brother but should try his best to reform him. This is not the teaching of the Holy Qur'an to find fault, spread it and go on talking about it to other people. In Qur'an God Almighty says:

وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿۱۸﴾

"Again he should have been of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to mercy."

(Surah Al Balad: 18).

It means when you find fault in other person then he should be exhorted and you should pray for him because prayer is more effective than any other thing. That person is regrettable who a hundred times describes the fault of another person but does not even pray once to God Almighty. Before describing one's fault one should weep, lament and pray at least for forty days and you should become

تخلقوا باخلاق اللّٰهِ

We do not mean that you should be in favor of fault finding but it means not to publicize and backbite because as it is written in the Holy Book of God that it is a sin to backbite and publicize a fault.

(*Malfoozat* vol.4 p. 60, 61.)

After exhorting about avoiding backbiting, the Promised Messiah[as] says, if a *Momin* finds the other *Momin* spiritually weak then he should confidentially exhort him. If he does not submit then pray for him because prayer is more effective than any other thing. So one should go on praying earnestly for forty days till God Almighty may accept your prayers for him and as a result of your prayers high morals in him may start generating. In this regard it is worth remembering that if your prayers for him are not accepted then his vices should be left on fate from God. In further commentary of this verse the Promised Messiah[as] says,

"Some sins are so fine and man is involved in them but he does not realize. From youth to old age he goes on committing such sins but is not conscious what he is doing e.g. he is habitual of complaining. Such people consider it a very ordinary and minor thing but the Holy Qur'an has declared it the worst thing and says:

God Almighty becomes angry with that person who utters such words that humiliate his brother and takes any such action that causes him harm. To describe that thing about one's brother which proves him to be an ignorant and foolish person or which may create hidden dishonor and hostility about his habit, all these are bad deeds.:

(*Tafseer, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood*[as] p.219)

The Promised Messiah[as] says.

"The heart is a small box of God Almighty and He possesses its Key. No one knows what is inside it? Then what is the use of unnecessarily involving in sin?"

It is stated in *Hadith*, God Almighty will say to a big sinner, come close to me and with His Own Hand He will put a veil between him and the other people and will ask him, have you committed such and such sin? He will count minor sins. Then he will say yes I have committed these sins. God Almighty will say ok today I have forgiven all of your sins and for each sin I have blessed you with the reward of ten good deeds. Then that man will think if for every minor sin I was given a reward of ten good deeds, then what about the major sins. It means that I will get a big reward for major sins. After thinking all this, he himself will start counting his major sins and will say, "O God I have committed these sins also." After listening to his confession God Almighty will laugh and say, Look! Due to my kindness this man has become so bold that he himself has confessed his sins. Then He will command him to go and enter according to his own liking through any of the eight doors of Heavens. So no one knows how God Almighty treats him or what has he got in his heart. So backbiting should completely be avoided."

(*Malfoozat, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood*[as] vol. 5 p.11)

The Promised Messiah[as] used to say, this disease is very common in women. The women stay awake and go on gossiping till late at night which indeed is backbiting. He says:

"About a backbiter it is stated in the Holy Qur'an that he eats the flesh of his dead brother. This disease is mostly found in women. They go on backbiting till mid night and when they get up in the morning, they start doing the same thing, but one should avoid doing so. In the Holy Qur'n there is a special *Surah* for women. It is in Hadith that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, I saw into the Heavens and found there mostly poor people and when I saw into the Hell there were mostly women."

(*Malfoozat, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood*[as]. Vol.5 p. 29.)

Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says:

"If you think over this example then human wisdom wonders. The more we think over it the more we are amazed that these are God Almighty's words and in this regard there could not be any better example than this one. A dead brother cannot defend himself and the example of a dead brother is just like some person sitting by your side, who gets up and goes away. Then you can talk against him whatever you like but it is not in his power to defend himself and this thing is as disgusting as eating the flesh of a dead brother. It looks very strange to you to eat carrion and when he is your own brother. Backbiting is just like this example. You backbite him who in the eyes of God is your brother."

In one of his Friday sermons Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says:

"The next step of backbiting is just like this that a person got up and started backbiting about that person with whom he was sitting. The meaning of backbiting is to harm someone in his absence and to speak against him. That person went to another person and said sir! You consider this person a good one but he is a very disgraced person because today he was talking against you but he does not tell that he was also a participant of this talk."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* Vol. 2 p.490.)

In one of his Friday Sermons Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] shed light on the relationship between suspicion and backbiting and said:

"If there is no forgiveness then first of all suspicion takes its place. It means man starts speculating even about those vices which are not visible and thinks that it may be this one or that one. Due to his fondness of noticing vices he takes pleasure in finding faults in the other person but when he does not find those faults there, he fulfills his nasty habit by suspicion and thinks yes this fault could not be found but it will definitely be there, and there must be something evil behind the scene which I could not see. Then suspicion gives birth to curiosity. The other aspect is that the attribute of covering the sins and failings fades

away. So without forgiveness the attribute of covering the sins cannot exist. This absence of the attribute of covering the sins gives further birth to two evils, one of them is backbiting and the other is malicious gossip."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* vol.3 p.51)

The Promised Messiah[as] says when you find fault in someone then do not propagate it among other people but start praying for him.

In the same sermon Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] said, when you backbite someone and that thing is true but it is so bad that if it is spoken in the presence of that person and he is offended then offending someone itself is a major sin. Hurting someone and keeping an eye on other people's vices is a very bad deed. It is also forbidden to speak such true words before him which may offend him. By doing so you your self will also become a sinner. So do not speak such words lest you become a sinner.

Hazoor says:

"Backbiting is such a thing which is spoken against a person in his absence but when he comes to know about it, he gets hurt. The definition of backbiting that was explained by the Holy Prophet[saw] proves that it is not to say something false about him, but it is to say something true but that thing is such which results in vexing him. If the same thing is spoken in his absence then it is called backbiting, but if it is spoken in his presence then it is called hurting."

Anyhow the meaning of backbiting is not that it should not be done in the absence of a person but it is permissible in his presence. When the purpose is to save the society from sorrow then whether it is a matter of one's presence or absence, in both cases it is strictly unlawful.

So the result of backbiting is that another vice takes birth which is bound to hurt and that is malicious gossip. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, that backbiting is prohibited but if someone listens another person backbiting and forwards that thing to the other person then the example of this malicious gossiper is like that person who throws an arrow towards someone, the arrow misses the target and falls down in his footsteps and any other person after picking up that arrow from his footsteps pierces it into his chest and then thinks that he has fulfilled his mission. So hurting someone is forbidden. The basic thing is to offend, to cause sorrow and to keep an eye on someone's faults is forbidden. It has been taught to avoid sins that is why this teaching is effective and ongoing everywhere but where ever it lacks, the evils sprout and even from them more branches of evils go on sprouting.''

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* vol.3 p.51, 52)

وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا

Means we should not find faults in others because finding fault itself is a major sin and it is to raise finger towards other person and not to analyze one's own condition and go on spying by assuming that such and such fault can positively be there. In this regard Khalifatul Masih IV [ra] says:

"When he does not find those imperfections then he fulfill his nasty habit's taste by assuming that the fault has not been found but it will definitely be there and there must be something wrong behind the scene which I could not see. Then this assumption creates curiosity. Man goes a step further and says if I could not find it then why should I not find and detect it, and such people waste all their lives in finding faults in others."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* vol.3 p.51)

A person who is habitual of backbiting and it is his hobby, it is for him that he should expiate by praying to God for that person's eradication of evils about whom he had backbitten. This is the best method of expiating and if he permanently wants to get rid of backbiting then he needs to go on praying. In the same sermon Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says:

"The question arises that those people who frequently tell lies and do it on regular basis as a digestive powder what is their expiation and how the Holy Prophet[saw] shed light on this topic?

Hadhrat Anas[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet [saw] said:

The expiation of backbiting is that you should pray to God for that person's forgiveness about whom you have backbitten and should go on praying for him:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهٗ

and if the rest of your life you have to avoid bad effects of backbiting then you should pay attention to prayer. This is a very good way of reformation i.e. it is not only expiation but also a very beautiful plan for abstaining from backbiting otherwise the person who has the taste of backbiting, it

is very difficult for him to avoid it but a person about whom you backbite start praying for him frequently with the intention of expiation then that prayer will change your internal condition. This is a very neat and clean plan which the Holy Prophet[saw] has described. It is expiation as well as a cure for avoiding evils."

(*Khutbat* vol.3 p.58)

By further elaborating the subject of backbiting Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says, so do not consider it an ordinary thing by thinking what difference it makes to utter some words about someone only for the sake of having a little bit enjoyment. These individual diseases become national and social diseases. They further spread and enter into international relationships as they have already done and in this regard God Almighty says, "Then that atom will be invented, and in this regard there is a full *Surah* in the Holy Qur'an."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* vol.3 p.61)

Further elaborating on the above mentioned subject Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] in his 25[th] September 1987 Friday Sermon says:

"So on one side you hear backbiting and if on the other side you have got the habit of talking ahead then due to this habit you will start talking ahead and these words will spread everywhere in the entire society. Then the third stage is that backbiting is not due to psychological diseases but, a mischief monger intentionally spreads false things in the society to destroy a nation and such a society which is suffering from the disease of backbiting and has already tolerated backbiting , has made it a part of its everyday life and of which people have become habitual to convey to others, they are the best prey of such enemies and they cannot get better environment than this one."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* vol.6 p. 616)

After noticing backbiting spreading at an international level, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] in the Friday sermon of 23[rd] August 1991 said:

"I want to talk to you about backbiting about which the Holy Qur'an has warned the *Momins* in very strict words. Though apparently backbiting is a very minor thing. It is the taste of tongues or ears which is found in men and women everywhere. It is such a disease which is common in all the nations of the entire world. It exists all over, in the East as well as the West. Why is the Holy Qur'an so strict about it. It says that a person who backbites, he is just like that person who eats his own dead brother's flesh. This is a very disgusting example. It is disgusting in a sense that hatred of such act has been explained in detail. First of all to eat the flesh of one's dead brother is very horrible and then to eat the flesh of a dead body. Why has this example been given. It has got many reasons. The first reason is very obvious that he cannot defend himself and secondly if he cannot defend even then this action is disgusting and it is just like eating some one's flesh. Thirdly if some one's piece of flesh is torn then he is harmed. On one side he loses his blood and on the other side a piece of his flesh is also cut out from his body and the man does not know what is happening to him then he goes on suffering from one sided loss and in a practical world backbiting does all these things."

(*Khutbat-e-Tahir* Vol.10 p. 687,688)

About backbiting Khalifatul Masih V[rh] says:

"Then there is another evil that is mistrust and suspicion. One assumes on his own that two persons sitting at a certain place must be planning some conspiracy or they must be involved in some evil and then they fabricate such a story which does not have any existence. This thing destroys relationships with family and friends and fuels violence in society. So in the Holy Qur'an God Almighty has instructed us to avoid this evil."

In *Surah Al-Hujarat* He said:

"O ye who believe! Avoid most of suspicions; for suspicions become sins. And spy not. So this command of God Almighty should always be kept in mind because in this way the foundation of better personal relationships will be laid and this will eradicate evils from the society. Some people assume bad things about others only to disgrace them and let them down in the eyes of other people."

(*Mashal-e-Rah* vol.5 part 4 p.19-20)

This humble person prays that may God go on protecting me and every individual of Ahmadiyya Community from backbiting and may we go on striving to save ourselves from backbiting so that it should not penetrate in our hearts. *Ameen.*

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THE MAJESTY OF HOW HE APPROACHED HIS DEATH REMAINS

Hadi Ali Chaudhary, Toronto

Translated by: Mansura Minhas, Miami, FL

"Today I am going to talk about an extremely dear, dedicated, faithful, kind soul endowed with numerous qualities, whose name was Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar, son of Chaudhry Farzand Ali Sahib who was martyred on 26 May in Rabwah.

He had a special love for Rabwah, which remained with him throughout his life, so much so, that he gave his life in the cause of Allah in its earth.

He offered his services for volunteering at Tahir Heart Institute without any reservation. He was extremely determined. To keep coming to this hospital to serve humanity selflessly, was a proof of his dedication to his profession. He was an extremely modest man. He had an exceptional memory. In addition to the Holy Qur'an and books of the Promised Messiah[as], he was interested in poetry and calligraphy."

(Hadhrat Ameerul Momineen (atba) Friday Sermon 20 May 2014)

He was our youngest brother - but a real big brother sacrificed in the way of Allah. It is not a new sacrifice, which *Shaheed* Mehdi Ali has offered. But in the spiritual requisites of this era, it presents a new color and new glimpse.

In essence, the chain of sacrifices was started 6 thousand years ago with the two sons of Hadhrat Adam[as]. Its mention is started in Verse 27 of *Sura Al-Maidah*. Through Hadhrat Ibrahim[as], sacrifices were given a new direction through The Great Sacrifice.

وَفَدَيْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيْمٍ ۝١٠٨

'And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice'. (As-Saffat: Vs 108).

In this direction, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and his Companions[ra] presented such sacrifices that provided great nourishment to the tree of Islam. The Holy Prophet's[saw] son in law and grandson were sacrificed in the way of God. His dear and close friends also presented themselves for this 'Great Sacrifice' and were martyred.

The Messiah and Mahdi[as] of the Latter Days who brought faith back from *Surraya* (the highest star), is termed as the Adam[as] of the age, Ibrahim[as] and Muhammad[saw] also. Thus, in this era, the mode of sacrifices is a kind of a special 'Great Sacrifice', which carries the collective and complete spirit of the above-mentioned sacrifices. In this complete era, the message of the revelation of Allah *'shatan-e-tuzbahan'* (that two goats will be sacrificed) also adopts a practical aspect. In the spirit of sacrifice, lives are devoted for faith and for the propagation of Islam - in the footsteps of the companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] - lives are laid down because this era is a complete era in all aspects.

On 26 May 2014, my younger brother (not only mine) Anwar Mubashir Sahib, Zulfiqar Ahmad Sahib, Iftikhar Ahmad Naseem Sahib, Shamim Ahktar Sahiba, Amtul Halim Sahiba, Mahmooda Nusrat Sahiba, Amjad Ali Sahib, Arshad Ali Sahib, Ashraf Ali Sahib, Afifa Najam Sahiba and Samina Najam Sahiba's youngest brother was martyred on the sacred soil of Rabwah. This was the first blood of a martyr who gave blood to the sacred soil according to the Promised Messiah's[as] revelation *'Daag-e-hijrat'* (stain of migration).

Our family is proud of the sacrifice of Mehdi Ali Shaheed and will *Insha Allah* always remain proud of it.

The name of the one who presented the sacrifice in the path of Almighty Allah in the soil of Rabwah was Mehdi Ali. He was a true and devout follower of the Promised Messiah[as], the Mehdi of the Age. He aspired for the triumph of his *Jama'at* and was engaged in this endeavor. His name kept him ever-connected to the Mehdi of the Age. His date of martyrdom is the death anniversary of the Promised Messiah[as]. In fact, according to confirmed historical records and research, on this very day, May 26, our beloved Lord and Master Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] also met his Eternal Lord. The purpose of writing this isn't that dear Dr. Mehdi Ali Shaheed is

being conferred any status that he did not deserve at all. But the real purpose of mentioning these coincidences is that their mention gives some solace to his dear ones while their hearts are filled with sorrow due to his loss. Then another purpose is that this Shaheed was so fortunate, that from Allah Almighty, he was granted a day of *Shahadat* which was the same as the date of death of the pure souls who were his spirit and body, heart and soul and center of his life; those who were the purpose of his existence. Thus, this was the only purpose behind mentioning this.

When I saw the picture of Mehdi Ali taken soon after his martyrdom, looking at the martyred body lying on the ground and the calm face, two verses of Hadhrat Khubaib Bin Adi[ra] captured the thoughts and mind. He said these verses when *Kuffar* were taking him to kill him, he said with determination, filled with the pleasure of seeking Allah's will:

"When I am being killed in the state of Islam and as a Muslim, I don't care how I fall after being killed. This is for the sake of God Almighty and if my God wills, He will send blessings upon my shattered body".

If this saying of Hadhrat Khubabib[ra] is true, which it surely is, then every particle of every martyred Ahmadi and every drop of their blood is testament to blessings from Allah for Islam Ahmadiyyat.

In pictures at the Columbus, Ohio mosque in America, Mehdi Ali Shaheed saw the Promised Messiah's[as] revelation "I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the Earth" on a huge map. Every fiber of his body and every drop of his blood have practically proven the truth of Hadhrat Khubaib's[ra] words. Thus, Allah *Ta'ala* filled every fiber of Mehdi Ali Shaheed with blessings. Through his martyrdom, Allah T*a'ala* has introduced once again Ahmadiyyat, the real Islam throughout the world with a renewed fervor. In this way, the Shaheed has become a source of spreading the message of the Promised Messiah[as] to a large part of the world.

In our family, in the family of our respected father Chaudhry Farzand Ali Sahib, there have been martyrdoms. Our mother *Muhtarma* Najm-unissa was such a blessed and pure soul that her father *Mohtaram* Master Ziauddin Arshad Sahib was martyred in 1974 and now son Mehdi Ali has been martyred. Thus, she has the crown of martyrdom on her head and her lap also has an offering of martyrdom. Oh our dear Allah! Grant them your Mercy and Nearness. *Ameen.*

Our father was a brave, fear -less and courageous landlord. He was truthful, compassionate, generous and well respected. Wrong people never could influence him. Similarly, our mother was a brave, fearless, patient and courageous woman. Day and night she would remain engaged in home and *Jama'at* affairs. Both were regular in offering *Tahajjud* and vied in good deeds. 1n 1974, my older brother Ashraf Ali Sahib and my maternal uncle Raja Naeem Ahmad Sahib were imprisoned in Sargodha jail. We saw that when some women offered sympathies, she would reply with utmost patience and courage, saying that 'they have been imprisoned for the sake of *Jama'at,* thus there is no need to worry. If they face any hardship, it will be for the *Jama'at*. It is something to be proud of and not to worry'. She would console such women and they would depart.

On July 16, the group that had travelled to Sargodha to meet the people from Rabwah who had been imprisoned in jail was attacked at Sargodha station. I was in this delegation and so was our maternal grandfather. My grandfather was hit in the head by a bullet and he didn't survive. Amidst the firing of bullets, two youngsters and I started caring for the injured. We were able to hide them behind a staircase. After that, we stepped on the railway track and started countering the attackers with stones. We were trying that the attackers could not reach the platform where the injured were lying. Thus, those who came there were forced to leave when the stones hit them. Afterwards the injured were admitted in Sargodha hospital. To take care of them and fulfill their needs, I stayed the night with them in the hospital. In this instance, rumors and news were started to float in Rabwah. About me, it was said that a bullet had hit me. In this whole situation, my parents were not impatient and anxious. Both were consoling those who had arrived to inquire. Afterwards, when my mother became aware of my grandfather's state, she did not indulge in wailing and crying. With prayers, she continued to perform her regular chores.

Our maternal grandfather was the first martyr from Rabwah's residents and Mehdi Ali is the first martyr on the soil of Rabwah. How

blessed is our mother to have been bestowed with these two distinctions. These two blessings were given to our fortunate and great mother that her father was a distinctive martyr and her dearest son was also one. Oh Allah! Accept their sacrifices and make their blood beneficial for Ahmadiyyat. *Ameen.*

I did not see my parents panic in hard times. They never considered anything unachievable. They were endowed with an ability and strength to accept every challenge and fulfill it. Mehdi Ali Shaheed was a son of these parents and he was adherent to these attributes. He writes about these emotions:

O night! Tell the stars, tell the spring of the garden
We are not afraid of storms, say to the signs of the waves
Free the sun of truth from every abode of darkness
Say to the light of sun's rays, we are witness to your existence
The sun and moon that shine in the deep darkness
Say to the darkness that we are the bright future of the world
Holding the flag of love, we the residents of Safa and Haram
Say to the hatemongers, we will defeat your every move
Fighting all storms, tearing all waves
Promise we'll reach you; tell the shore, the banks
We are the fireflies of *Khilafat's* lamp holding Allah's rope
You will burn in your fire, tell the sparks of Iblis
We the deep oceans of patience and obedience, tall mountains of steadfastness and loyalty
You'll be wiped out if you encounter us, tell the current of disbelief
Will be destroyed from the world, those who say 'Hail Hubal'
The slogan of *'Ana-al-Haq'*, tell those who lay down their lives
The valleys and mountains, forests and gardens will echo 'Allah ho Akbar'
Truth will come, you will evade, tell the friends of falsehood
Look the flowers of *Tauheed* have spread their fragrance in the land
Tell these amazing scenes, this scene is the most beautiful

(Dr. Mehdi Ali Chaudhry-Columbus OH)

Despite his innocence, humility and kind nature, Mehdi Ali was brave, hard working and one who had an urge to move forward. Like his parents, he made hard work and service his motto and made successful efforts to hone all his skills. He was a great and accomplished heart specialist and possessed a big and magnanimous heart in his chest. He was used to giving preference to others and had a desire to treat them with kindness. Many of such similar traits had developed a distinguishing spark in his character. It was this spirit that made him a living example of the Promised Messiah's[as] verse:

'My goal, my destination and desire is service of God's creatures. This is my work, my duty, my way and my destination'.

He was busy and engaged in this path with utmost simplicity and without any formality and care for protocol. Without any show-off and formality, in line with the Promised Messiah's[as] teachings, the purpose of his life was to serve without yearning for any reward. He was not wishful of any praise and accolades. He served and was a passenger along the road to service. While embarked upon this righteous path of his life, he travelled a huge distance in one leap. No one can deny that even in his death, he has served the *Jama'at*. He has introduced Ahmadiyyat to the corners of the earth in his own way. May Allah accept his effort and may his martyrdom play a significant role in the nourishment of the tree of Ahmadiyyat. *Ameen.*

Allah *Ta'ala* has made such a distinction between the beast who commits the most heinous act of murder and the proud martyr in the way of Allah. The killer after murdering becomes accursed in the court of Allah *Ta'ala* and is scared of the people and keeps hiding from the world and this high bird having escaped the cage of the world resides in heavens of Almighty Allah's pleasure. Concurrently, he continues to shine in the corners of the earth and carries the sympathies and prayers of millions of people. This *Shaheed* rightly said:

I am a bird
You are like a worm
You hide in the earth
My flight is to the heavens
You die under the feet

When I look at the personalities of my parents and their character, I see a similar distinguishing desire to serve the faith and sacrifice, which is apparent in the early adherents of faith. Not only the *Sahaba*[ra], when we look at the examples of *the Sahabiat*[ra], we see that they were an amazing nation, ever ready to sacrifice. When we look at that era, we see

many instances that if a *Sahabia's*[ra] husband dies, she never wailed and cried. When sons are martyred, they don't create hue and cry. When a father is sacrificed in the way of Allah, there is no wailing. Look at the history of *Sahaba*[ra] there is no such instance that any *Sahabia*[ra] had complained to God or the Holy Prophet[saw] at the martyrdom of their dearest one. On the contrary, the level of affection was such that after a great human loss in Battle of Uhud, when the Holy Prophet[saw] left for Medina with his *Sahaba*[ra], the people of Medina left the city and came out a distance. A person coming from Uhud told an Ansari *Sahabia*[ra] that her father, brother and husband had been all martyred. This devout, steadfast *Sahabi*[ra] who was eager to learn about the well being of the Holy Prophet[saw], asked restlessly 'Tell me how is the Holy Prophet[saw]?' She *was told that by the Grace of Allah, Rasulallah*[saw] is fine and is approaching. When she saw the Holy Prophet[saw], she spontaneously said 'If the Holy Prophet[saw] is alive, all hardships are in vain'.

This is an example of the utmost patience of *a Sahabia*[ra], who had lost all dear ones but she returned home with the consolation that *Alhumdullilah* the Holy Prophet[saw] was fine. This consolation was her strongest and unyielding support.

Then there were the lion hearted mothers like Hadhrat Hansa[ra], who were a bright light of bravery and sacrifice. Hadhrat Hansa[ra] was a pious woman with an elevated status. She was an exemplary scholar and a great poet. During the time of Hadhrat Umar[ra] in 16 *Hijra*, in the War of Qadsia in Faris, she prepared her four lion-like sons herself, with a yearning for martyrdom. Having closed the doors defeat, sending them in the war zone, she said:

"You became Muslim on your own accord; you migrated on your own accord. You know of the reward that Allah has promised in the war with the disbelievers. Thus, stay enlightened and embark upon a fight with the enemy tomorrow morning and keep asking for Allah's help".

The brave sons of Hadhrat Hansa[ra], the *Sahaba*[ra] of the *Rasulullah*[ra] embarked upon the war field and one after the other they were martyred. When Hadhrat Hansa[ra] heard about their martyrdoms, she replied in a dignified and confident tone:

'*Alhumdullilah,* Allah has blessed me with their martyrdom, and I am hopeful from my Lord that He will unite me with them in His abode of Mercy'.

I often think that how much the sacrifices of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya bear similarity to the *Sahaba*[ra] and *Sahabiat*[ra] of Holy Prophet[saw].

After his other brother left Rabwah, dear Mehdi Ali Shaheed had spent the most time with his brave parents and now after his martyrdom also he has reached them first and is surely with them in the Gardens of Righteous. They were the ones who raised their children like this.

Mehdi Ali *Shaheed* was such a son of his parents that in the last days of his father's life, he took care of him day and night. A few months before his death, his father was unable to walk and Mehdi Ali was with him in Rabwah and he took care of his needs and provided care for him and took complete care of his treatment and medicines. Other brothers who lived in Rabwah also took care, but since Mehdi Ali Shaheed lived with him, he got the most opportunity to serve.

When our mother suffered a heart attack in Toronto, Mehdi Ali took utmost care and fulfilled his duty to serve along with his other brothers.

If such parents are present and such children continue to be born in the *Jama'at* of Believers- *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, then let alone defeat of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, it can never face even an iota of disappointment. These signs are distinguishing marks of *Jama'ats* of Prophets and these characteristics are hallmarks of these *Jama'ats. Insha Allah*, till the Day of Judgment, such parents will be present and their children who sacrifice in the way of Allah.

Those who believe in the Prophets, when their base is built upon the strong foundation of faith, then no power in the world can shake this foundation, no matter how much hardships they encounter. Their determination doesn't waver even a small bit.

The cruel, on the basis of their so-called power, thinks that he will remove the believers from faith with cruelty. He commits cruelty but cannot be successful, thus becomes aggravated and commits even more atrocities. But this time again, his atrocities lose. His reach cannot touch the patience and steadfastness of believers. But still he becomes agitated and constructs greater cruelty, but the

height of the believers continues to rise. Here the cruelty rises and there the steadfastness enhances. In this struggle and the state of race, Allah *Ta'ala* says: "Only the believers and pious will be successful and victorious". The Divine promise of victory is fulfilled with great might and glory in the favor of believers.

If a believer is hurt during these tough times, then the hearts of the whole *Jama'at* of believers are restless. But their reaction, as the Promised Messiah[as] has said, is such that they remain ever inclined to Allah *Ta'ala* seeking help and prayers for enhancing their patience and steadfastness.

When enmity increased in the mayhem
We turned to our Beloved's abode

They become absorbed in their Lord, they become even more absorbed and seek forgiveness and mercy for the aggressors. Allah *Ta'ala's* nearness is a strength, which in calamities and testing times, is only bestowed upon by the God Almighty. Through its support, their every step moves towards strive and progress and keeps moving forward. For the believers, *Allah Ta'ala* keeps an avenue of goodness in the animosity and opposition of enemies. Promised Messiah[as] explaining this logic said:

"The attention of love and affection is a separate issue, but the attention from animosity is not fruitless either, rather it is helpful. Look, in the time of the Holy Prophet[saw], against him the attention of love and affection was not only less, it was in fact nothing. But animosity was at its peak and it was this animosity that became the source of spreading his fame in ordinary people and to the corners of Arabia. Otherwise, what other means did he possess to spread his message? For the Holy Prophet[saw], *Tabligh* was an extremely difficult task but God did such that it was done through the hands of enemies".

(Al-Hakam,10 April 1902)

In the light of this enlightening passage of the Promised Messiah[as], if we examine the patience and steadfastness of the Holy Prophet's[saw] *Sahaba[ra]*, we witness that they never refrained from any great sacrifice and were never hesitant to pass through testing times. They braved these adversities and continued to march forward. The *Jama'at* of the Promised Messiah[as] also carries this spirit. One demonstration is our brother Mehdi Ali *Shaheed.* Commending his sacrifice, Hadhrat *Ameerul Momineen*[aba] in his Friday sermon of May 30, 2014 said:

"This martyr continued to witness successes in his life and kept serving God's creatures. He received such a death that he found an Eternal abode with Allah. May Allah grant our brother an elevated status in Heaven. May his status continue to elevate and he is granted a place in the feet of His Beloveds. May Allah protect his wife and children and may all the good wishes and prayers that doctor sahib had for his children are accepted".

After the martyrdoms of Hadhrat Maulvi Abdur Rahman[ra] and Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif Shaheed[ra], the Promised Messiah[as] had said:

"O Latif, thousands of mercies be upon you that you showed an example of your dedication in my life. I do not know that from the people of my *Jama'at* who remain after me, what would they accomplish".

(Tadhkiratul Shahadatein; Ruhani Khazain Vol 20, pg 16)

Keeping the history of these martyrdoms in front, we offer allegiance to the call of the Promised Messiah[as] and say with extreme humility and confidence to him:

"O, the dear Messiah[as] of Muhammad[saw]! In your *Jama'at,* in line with your teaching and Holy Quran's mention '*And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice*', there are many who are committed to act upon it with fervor. Upon your call, they are ever ready to show such examples with utmost determination, perseverance, patience and steadfastness, which you expect from them.

فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضٰى نَحْبَهٗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْتَظِرُ

'There are *some* of them who have fulfilled their vow, and *some* who *still* wait' (Al-Ahzab 24)

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Hadhrat Abi Ya'la Ma'qil bin Yasar[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[saw] of Allah say: "The one whom Allah entrusted with the affairs of his subjects and died in such a state that he was dishonest in his dealings with his subjects, Allah will bar him from entering Heaven."

Another version states: He who is not sincere in the discharge of his responsibilities towards his wards will not have the fragrance of Paradise.

(Muslim kitabul iman

AHMADIYYAT, THE TRUE ISLAM: ANSWER TO WORLD PEACE

Sarah Meelu

The world today is going through major unrest and upheavals, and Islam is the only way through which true peace and contentment can be attained during these troubling times. It alone embodies the universal teachings found in the earlier religions, and can take man to spiritual levels not possible other than through complete submission and total obedience to God, which is Islam. Islam is a faith built upon principles of peace and security. In his groundbreaking book, "Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues," Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh], the Fourth Successor to the Promised Messiah[as], writes, "The single most important malady of the world today is the absence of peace. In the contemporary world, man, as a whole, has reached a high standard of achievement in material progress made possible by the advancement of science and technology in every sphere of human requirement at a mind-boggling pace...nevertheless, man is not happy and content. There is growing restlessness, fear, premonition, lack of trust in the future and dissatisfaction with one's heritage from the past. These are some of the important elements which challenge the nature of the contemporary world...man is in search of peace." Although these words were spoken more than twenty years ago, they still hold true today. Everywhere we look in the world, there is turmoil that has permeated all internal and external spheres of people's lives. However, the fact is that such a state of terrible unrest will continue until man finds a path which leads him to his true Creator and Maker; this is the reason man was created.

The only path for this today is Islam, which embodies all the ways and means by which man can effectively manage his problems while obeying Divine commandments. The Holy Prophet[saw] himself proved to be perfect example for Muslims today, which are daily drifting further from Islam and its true teachings. Nowhere in his teachings can it be found that he said to spread Islam through force. Certainly, "The current decline of Islam demands a Reformer. Islam today is in a very precarious state, and its light has been almost completely eclipsed. The Muslims have erred not only in their beliefs but also in their practices," wrote the Promised Messiah[as]. The truth is that Islam is based on the eternal principles of justice and fairness in all affairs, from the most trivial things to issues in the world at large. Only with a proper emphasis on justice and equity can peace be achieved and maintained in the world. As God says in the Holy Qur'an, "O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do" (Ch. 5:5-9). Islam is the only religion that provides the key to world peace, for it alone places the necessary importance on justice in all human actions, whether personal, professional, political, or international. In the Holy Qur'an, peace is always mentioned alongside justice, for without true justice, there can be no peace. In terms of basic dealings in society, in all kinds of social relationships, it is seen that fairness and responsibility are of the highest import. The Holy Prophet[saw] made this well known in his Farewell Sermon, in which he said: Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all time. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker...What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth." These hallowed words illustrate the need for just dealings in each sphere of one's life.

Moreover, knowing that one will be held accountable for one's actions is crucial to peace in the world at every level – from peace at home to peace between nations. It is due to lack of faith in the Hereafter that causes inequity and disorder to take hold. In the blessed words of the current Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba], "for peace in the world to

be established it is essential that proper standards of justice are developed at every level, and in every country in the world." This goes to show that peace and justice go hand in hand and require a deep faith and conviction in the rights of God and the rights of others.

Now, it is important when considering the current events in the world today to mention the sorry state of affairs in the Muslim world in particular. The majority of so-called Muslims have strayed far away from the basic teachings of Islam, thereby bringing shame to this beautiful religion and way of life. These "Muslims" decline to accept the simple truth that, as the Promised Messiah[as] once wrote, "the true religion is the one whose irrefutable arguments and inner excellences themselves act as a sword, and it requires no sword made of steel." So blind are they that today's fundamentalists fail to see that, being such a peaceful and all-encompassing faith, there is no need to use force to spread Islam – those who are open to its teachings and who are of good hearts will naturally be drawn towards it. The Promised Messiah[as] himself once said, "Islam rejects the use of force to spread religion under any circumstances. The Holy Qur'an categorically says, 'There is no compulsion in religion' (Ch. 2: 257)." The Promised Messiah[as] was sent in fulfillment of many prophecies to revive Islam and to bring all people together, united in the faith of One God, through peace, harmony, and mutual kindness. How can these barbaric, faithless people committing such atrocious acts in the world today call themselves Muslims? In his comprehensive book, "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth," Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] writes, "It is the bounden duty of every believer to invite mankind to the path of God with wisdom and goodly persuasion...this is the Divine global plan for the conquest of human ideas and ideologies by Islam. Can anyone detect even a particle of irrationality therein? The steaming stinking breath of the fundamentalist, as he exhorts the sentiments of the Muslim masses and stirs them up to wage bloody wars against the nonbelievers has never been observed in the conduct of prophets and those who follow them. He [the extremist] draws his authority entirely from his own distorted vision. His attitude is alien to the Qur'an as disease is to cure and venom is to elixir. The number of verses exhorting Muslims to make the best use of reason, rationality, and scientific investigation...adds up to 750." It is clear that there is no place in Islam for violence and extremism. Today's extremists use a few verses meant for specific battles during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet[saw] and have completely misinterpreted not only them, but the entire Qur'an itself, in the most vile manner. The early history of Islam shows us that Muslims only took up the sword when they had to defend themselves, or to avenge those who killed them wrongfully. Even then, they did so regretfully and with hearts full of remorse.

The fact that Islam is fighting for its very life today is indeed part of the Divine plan, which consisted of raising a reformer in the Latter Days to rejuvenate Islam and cleanse it of all impurities, thereby drawing mankind to the praise of One Lord. Such a reformer came with the blessed and holy advent of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] of Qadian, the Messiah whose advent was foretold specifically by the Holy Prophet[saw] on a few occasions. On one such occasion, the Holy Prophet[saw] was sitting in a gathering with his companions and put his hand on the shoulder of the Persian Salman[ra] and said that if faith were to go to the Pleiades, a man from among these would surely find it (*Bukhari*). The Promised Messiah[as] himself always held the Holy Prophet[saw] in the highest regard and said his life was the prime example for all Muslims to follow. As the Messiah of the Latter Days, he was the recipient of countless Divine revelations and was bestowed with keen knowledge and insight into the Holy Qur'an and the treasures contained in it. It is worth mentioning with the current unrest in Syria that he once received a Divine revelation, "Crisis in Damascus." This prophecy is literally being fulfilled before our very eyes today. There are countless other prophecies which he received that have been fulfilled in all their glory and others which still have to be fulfilled, and will in the future be recognized as being such, God – willing.

Indeed, Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam is the rightly distinct way left for mankind to recognize its true purpose and goals; a true rejuvenation of faith in this world is critical for peace to be had. Peace in the world begins with peace with oneself; the Promised Messiah[as] demonstrated himself that salvation is something man can attain in this very life; once he wrote, "True salvation begins in this very life. It is a light that descends upon the soul and reveals the path that leads to destruction. Tread the path of truth and wisdom so

that you may be led to God, and strengthen your hearts so that you may move towards to truth." During these Latter Days when the world is being rocked with calamities and misfortunes at every turn, humanity's only hope lies in accepting the true servant and follower of the Holy Prophet[saw], the Promised Messiah[as]. He alone calls people to the true Islam and through Ahmadiyyat Islam will be revived to its former days of glory, *Insha Allah*. "Rest assured," the Promised Messiah[as] once wrote, "... that God will never allow Islam to become a target of such [evil] aspersions."

Today, the holy mission brought by the Promised Messiah[as] lives on with his Fifth Successor, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba]. Our beloved Imam has repeatedly advised us on how to reach higher levels of faith and to work towards peace and justice in the world around us; in his notable address at the national Peace Symposium organized by the Ahmadiyya *Jama'at* in the UK, he said: "As far as the Ahmadiyya Community is concerned, wherever and whenever the opportunity arises, we openly express and declare our view that there is only one way to save the world from the destruction and devastation that it is heading towards, and that is that we must all endeavor to spread love, affection and a sense of community. Most importantly, the world must come to recognize its Creator, Who is the One God. This is because it is the recognition of the Creator that leads us towards love and compassion for His Creation, and when this becomes part of our character, it is then that we become recipients of God's Love. We constantly raise our voice calling for peace in the world, and it is the pain and anguish we feel in our hearts that inspires us to try and alleviate the suffering of mankind and to make the world we live in a better place. Indeed, this very function is just one of our many efforts towards achieving this goal."

May we all strive to live up to these high ideals in our daily lives so we can become true representatives of Islam in a world full of turbulence, injustice, and violence. Once we ourselves embody the principles of Islam through Ahmadiyyat, others will also want to join this blessed faith specially chosen by God for mankind. Once mankind recognizes this holy and sacred path, the world will be a haven of peace, love, and security for all.

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Hadhrat Mu'adh bin Jabal[ra] relates that once I was riding behind the Holy Prophet[saw] on a donkey and he[saw] said: "O Mu'adh! Do you know what is the right of Allah upon His servants and what is the right of servants on Allah? I said, 'Allah and His Messenger[saw] know best.' He[saw] said, 'The right of Allah upon His servants is that they worship Him only and do not associate aught with Him and the right of a servant of Allah upon Allah is that He does not punish the one who did not associate anything with Him.' I said, O Messenger[saw] of Allah, 'Shouldn't I give this glad tiding to the people?' He[saw] replied, 'Do not tell them this good news, for they would trust in it alone.' "

(Muslim kitabul Iman)

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Allah, the most Honored and Glorious, will call the dwellers of Paradise saying, "O dwellers of Paradise. They will respond, 'Here we are, our Lord, and all good is in Your Hands.' He will ask them, 'Are you happy?' They will answer, 'Why should we not be happy, O our Lord, when You have bestowed upon us that which You have not bestowed on any of Your other creation.' He will say to them, 'Shoudn't I bestow upon you even better than that?' They will say, 'O our Lord! What could be better than that?' He will say, 'I will bestow My pleasure and contentment upon you so that I shall never be wroth with you thereafter.' "

(Bukhari kitabul jannah)

Hadhrat 'Umar bin Al-Khattab[ra] relates that some prisoners including a woman were brought to the Holy Prophet[saw]. A woman amongst them was breast to feeding. So, whenever she saw a child she picked it up, embraced and breast-fed the child. The Holy Prophet[saw] told us, "Do you think this woman can throw her child into the fire? We replied, 'No. As long as possible, she will not throw her child into the fire.' He[saw] said, 'Allah is more Merciful to his people than this woman is to her child.' "

(Bukhari kitabul adab)

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PAY ZAKAT

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MY MOTHER - A PARAGON: A MEMOIR BY NEAR ONES

Dr. Amtul Q. Farhat

My beloved mother Sardar Begum W/O Ch. Hidayatullah Sahib of Chak 35 South Sargodah passed away in Rabwah on July 14, 2014.

اِنَّا لِلّٰہِ وَاِنَّا اِلَیْہِ رَاجِعُوْنَ

Her funeral prayer was led by Hadhrat Mirza Khurshid Ahmad Sahib, *Nazir A'la* Rabwah on 16th of July 2014 at 5 pm, local time and she was buried in *Bahishti Maqbra*, Rabwah.

Heritage she was Proud of

She was daughter of Chaudhari Ghulam Hussain of Gujranwala, who accepted Ahmadiyyat at the hand of the Promised Messiah[as] by letter and daughter-in-law of Hadhrat Chaudhary Maula Bakhash (1880-1936), the companion of the Promised Messiah[as].

Long Life- Lived for Lord Almighty

Born in 1912 she lived a very active and ambulant life except for the last two years. She served as Local *Lajna* president for more than three decades. She taught the Holy Qur'an to scores of non-Ahmadi as well Ahmadi children. She had memorized almost 15 *paras* of the Holy Qur'an along with hundreds of *Ahadith,* Qaseeda of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as], attributes of God, attributes of the Holy Prophet[saw], different types of *Durood Sharif* and many poems from *Durre Sameen* and *Kalam-e-Mahmood* which she would recite till her last days.

I am witness to the fact that whenever I woke up during night, I always found my parents either praying or reciting the Holy Qur'an or *Durood Sharif* or *Tasbeehaat*. I cannot recall a single morning when I woke up and found my parents sleeping. As a child, I took it as a norm but as I grew up I encompassed its full meaning.

A Regimental Routine in the service of God

Her daily *Ibadaat* included many *Nafli Salats* as well as recitation of multiple chapters of the Holy Qur'an, *Durood* and *Tasbeehaat*. She carried out her daily routine of *Ibadaat* very strictly. Sometime she would quietly sneak away from very interesting gathering to her room to complete her day's routine. When asked why she left instead of enjoying everyone's company, she would reply that she was running behind in her daily schedule of recitations and she was running short of time. Even in her 90s she was busy in her routine just like that!

Timing the Time

Her daily chores and activities were timed not by minutes or hours but by number of *Rukus* of the Holy Qur'an she could recite or number of times *Durood Sharif* or *Tasbeehaat* she could recite before the end of any activity. I feel it was this lifelong regimental disciplined routine of hers which contributed to her long, healthy and active life.

Fasting till 90s

She regularly fasted during the month of *Ramadan* and always observed six optional days of fasting in the month of *Shawal*. Only in the last three or four years of her life she did not fast. Partly it was due to the fact that she was not told that the month of *Ramadan* had begun. In one *Ramadan* she found out from *Al-Fazl* that *Ramadan* had begun and she insisted to fast and completed the month in fasting. When Hazoor-e-Anwar[aba] started the scheme of *Nafli* Fasts, she included that too as part of her *Ibadaat.*

Experience of Lailatul Qadr (the Night of Decree)

Decades ago, in the month of *Ramadan* she experienced a very pleasant and strange scene one night. She described that it was really a dark night and there were no lights whatsoever. All of a sudden the whole environment lit up brightly and the lights flew like rivers from one direction to the other. She said it was truly fascinating and that she could feel the joy and serenity of those lights even at the time she was describing it. My father who was at a distance overheard her description and exclaimed

at once that my mother had experienced *Lailatul Qadar* (the night of decree). *Ammi Jan* was very surprised and started visualizing in retrospect. Realizing that it was an odd wet dark and cloudy night in the last ten days of the holy month of *Ramadan,* she became convinced that she indeed had been through the Divine experience of *Lailatul Qadar*. She was offering early morning Prayer (*Tahajjud*) at the time however, and did not conceive the beautiful flood of lights which she was engulfed in as *Lailatul Qadar* and therefore did not pray for anything specific.

The Vision of the Holy Prophet[saw]

When she memorized Qaseeda by Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] she hoped to see the vision of the Holy Prophet[saw] as it is foretold by the Promised Messiah[as] to all those who will memorize Qaseeda by heart. For quite some time she did not experience any such vision and forgot all about it. A few months later she saw a dream in which she saw a group of people surrounding the Holy Prophet[saw]. She was not able to remember the face of the Holy Prophet[saw] but she described the vision as real and truly factual.

I have seen many of her prayers being accepted miraculously. Sometime her prayers were materialized word by word.

Moments of involuntary prostration....

At time she would just fall in prostration and tears would role in her eyes. When asked what makes her prostrate so spontaneously, she replied: I am so little and the lowest of all and yet Allah has blessed me and my children with His countless blessings. The very thought makes me bow down in utmost praise and thankfulness to my Lord Almighty. She would repeatedly say that it is the blessings of the Promised Messiah[as] that we are driven out of ignorance to enlightenment.

Justice is Just

She was a straightforward, just and honest person. When it came to giving opinions or advice she would not compromise her principals even for her own children. She would say and do what was right, just and honest. She would refer to the saying of the Holy Prophet[saw] that a true believer is not a coward. Instead a believer is always bold and steadfast.

Guests of two worlds

My father was *Numberdar* as well as the local President of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya. As such our house would receive frequent visitors and guests from the Government especially police officials as well as those from Rabwah. My mother was the sole person to look after them. She would make arrangements for their drinks, meals as well as room when and if required. All this would not upset her daily routine of *Ibadaat*. Some of the honorable guests she entertained include Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahamad Sahib who later became Khalifatul Masih IV[rh], Hadhrat Maulana Rajekee Sahib and members of the family of the Promised Messiah[as].

My grandmother Talia Begum Sahiba lived a long life. In her later years she became paralyzed and was bedridden. My mother was the sole person responsible for all her needs which she fulfilled patiently till her death in 1964.

In sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trial.....

My mother had a highly contented, composed and relaxed personality. In difficult circumstances, she would pray a lot but remain contented and relaxed. She would quote from *Hadith* that if something good happens to a believer, he gives thanks for it and if something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience (Muslim)

If any one of us had a difficult period, she would have a positive approach. I remember her advising me at a tremulous stage of my life that the greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allah loves someone He tests him. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath." (Hadith)

Once she was admitted in Mayo Hospital Lahore where she underwent an eye surgery for cataract. Her grandsons were then working as residents in the department. She was explained that a few injections will be given around her eyes. She had no anxiety or nervousness; so much so that even her surgeon admitted not having seen a patient before in his practice so relaxed and at ease in the Operation Theater. She would often refer to the Holy Qur'an that life is an appointed term so one should not be scared of death.

Education the Best Dower

Girl's education was not a norm in those days. When Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] advocated education for girls, my Grandfather (*Nana Jan*) focused on her home schooling. She learned to read very quickly and remained very fond of reading all her life. She always prayed for her father for giving her the best of dower. Reading *Al-Fazl* was her favorite and she continued reading the entire *Al-Fazl* till last weeks of her life. Our house was always full of all sorts of publications of *Jama'at* and she would read each and every one of those with great interest and be highly thankful to Allah for her reading skills. She always attributed it to the blessings of accepting the Promised Messiah[as] by her parents.

Even though she had no formal education, she possessed excellent mental mathematical skills. She could do very complicated mathematical calculations without using pen and paper. Once my sister was not able to solve a math question. She sought help from my mother who solved it in her mind and explained the solution to my sister who was astonished at her mental mathematical skills.

Ammi Jan leaves behind 7 children, 31 grandchildren, 74 great grandchildren and one great great grandson. *Masha Allah*!

Her funeral prayer in absentia was led by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] on July 23, 2014 at Bait ul Fazal Mosque London.

TABLIGH REPORT: NEW YORK JAMA'AT

A new *Bai'att*: Ms. Magdalena Franco accepted the true Islam. We welcome her to the fold of Ahmadiyyat. May Allah bless her and reward her.

During *Ramadan*, our *Jama'at* was blessed with many opportunities to participate in different *Iftar* Programs hosted by Non-Ahmadi organizations. On July 20th, 2014, Imam Shamsi Ali, an Indonesian Scholar, invited our *Jama'at* to attend an *Iftar* program in Manhattan. There were more than 200 guests present at the event and felt as if we were the organizers of the event as our *Jama'at* members were the ones welcoming all the other guests. We gave every guest a copy of "The Review of Religion: Free Speech & Islam Dialogue or Dissension?" *Jama'at* President Sahib met a lot of guests during the program, gave them a copy of "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam". Sadr Sahib gave an introduction of our *Jama'at* to the guests as well as shared with them what our organization is doing around the world. The main guest of Honor at this event was the Ambassador of Indonesia.

On August 9th, the *Jama'at* was invited to a Nigerian church in Brooklyn to participate in an interfaith meeting. At the interfaith meeting, we shared different projects that our community is currently doing in Nigeria. Also present at this interfaith event was the Deputy Ambassador of Nigeria who acknowledged the work that our *Jama'at* is currently doing in their nation.

Aside from all the events that we are attending, we are also mailing different books to our Non-Ahmadi friends. Our Harlem bookstall is still taking place.

Distribution of the book, World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace:

Shortly the book will be available for free distribution by members of the *Jama'at* to appropriate persons known to them. The book carries Hazoor's addresses at the Capitol, European Parliament, British Parliament and other such locations. It also carries Hazoor's letters to world head of states. Please contact Ghafoor Sahib for your copy and at the same time provide the contact information of the person whom the book is being presented.

Source Baituz Zafar Envoy, September 2014 issue

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MY FRIEND: MEHMUD AHMED

Advocate Mujeeb-ur-Rahman

My acquaintance with Mehmud Ahmed Sahib extended over more than half a century. On the occasion of *Eid* this year I sent him *Eid* greetings. His son got in touch with me and told me that he had died in the month of May.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ

He was my age group, but as it happened, we did not cross each other during our student's life. I joined the Rawalpindi Bar in 1961. I was an outsider in Rawalpindi but soon became a member of a group of young lawyers. We occupied a table in the corner of the Bar association and discussed everything under the earth. We conceived of starting a forum and named it as "The Rostrum"

Shaikh Basharat Ahmad, one of the members, brought in Mehmud Ahmad Sahib as a journalist friend and he also became a member of The Rostrum. This was my first introduction with him. He was well read and well informed and had a pleasant personality. Very soon I found out that he was an Ahmadi. My association with Mehmood Ahmad Sahib continued for rest of life.

The Rostrum invited prominent personalities like, Justice S. M. Murshid, Mr. ATM Mustafa of East Pakistan, Mr. A. K. Brohi, Maulvi Fareed Ahmad an MNA from East Pakistan and some others. The activities of this unknown young lawyers group hit the banner headlines in Pakistan Times because of Mehmud Ahmad Sahib.

He worked in Pakistan Times in the good days. Subsequently he worked, sometimes as a free lance and with other periodicals and journals. He also worked for *Khaleej Times*. If I remember correctly, his last job was with the Business Recorder in Pakistan. He mostly covered the political events and his beat sometimes included reporting on court proceedings. His last meeting with me in Pakistan was in the Supreme Court premises where he came to report on some important cases during the period of Chief Justice Ch. Iftekhar Muhammad.

As a journalist he kept moving and therefore our meetings became few and far between, but our mental affinity bonded us together and every time we met it was as if we had never parted.

Mehmud Ahmad Sahib was a very committed Ahmadi. In 1974, the district *Ameer* of Rawalpindi *Jama'at,* Ch. Ahmad Jaan Sahib deputed me to deliver a particular message to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh}. Mehmud Ahmad Sahib was to accompany me. Late in the evening we started in my weather beaten old Fiat car. We had to go to Rabwah via the mountainous route of *Kallar Kahhar* and *Katha*. At the dead of the night, while we were going downhill at a point some dacoits tried to stop our car, Mehmud Ahmad Sahib's presence of mind saved us. I slowed down my car for a while, but he asked me not to stop and to go full throttle. Fortunately we were not pursued. After a while we saw a convoy of some cars moving at a fast speed right below the hill. Mehmud Ahmad Sahib said it seems Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh} is travelling to Islamabad. It was about *Fajr* time. When we reached downhill at *Pail*, we found that it was indeed the *Qafila* of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh}. We met him for a short while and then Hazoor departed for Islamabad. Those were the days when he came to Islamabad to join the National Assembly proceedings.

On another occasion we met Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh} in Rabwah. I used to speak very little in the presence of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih^{rh}, but I found that Mehmud Ahmad Sahib could converse with Hadhrat Sahib with great ease and confidence. Hazoor seemed to know him well. I think those were the days when Samdani tribunal was holding the inquiry into the Rabwah incident. Mehmud Ahmad Sahib was full of information and frankly expressed his opinion about Mr. Bhutto. He did not have a very charitable view of Mr. Bhutto's personality and character. He expressed his views about the elections also. I envied his composure and ease with which he conversed.

During 1974, our interaction was more frequent. In Islamabad, Mehmud Sahib's wife, Abida

Mehmud was well known in *Lajna* circles and his son Jamshaid was quite active and visible in *Khuddam ul Ahmadiyya.*

Mehmud Sahib loved books and he was a voracious reader; he read all kinds of diverse subjects. Occasionally he would recommend a book to me. With a lifelong reading habit he accumulated a good collection of books. When he was moving to Dubai he donated a good number of books to the Library of Islamabad *Jama'at*. There were other valuable books, which he wanted the *Khilafat* Library to take, but the number was quite large and would need a few *Almirahs*. Finally he made a selection of books, which he thought would be useful for the *Markazi* library and I think he donated the books to the library.

His habit of reading continued till the end. When I met him in Canada in 2012, it was a very pleasant meeting. He was very weak in health but full of information about latest books and international journals. In Canada, his friends included Dr. Pervaiz Parvazi, a great literary critic and a writer, and one Colonel Anwar whom I found to be a great reader of books. Mehmud Sahib enjoyed the company of such people. I was fortunate to be included in one of their meetings in Canada. He kept on forwarding to me some international clippings from journals and shared with me his comments on international events. When he came to know of a good book, he would get it from anywhere in the world. The last thing that I was able to do for him also related to a book which somebody in Pakistan had written and he wanted the book. So he asked me if I could get a copy and send it him through his daughter -in-law who was in Islamabad and was due to travel back. It was a pleasure for me to do this little service. Journalism was his profession but reading was a passion with him.

His family is now settled in Canada. May Allah bless his soul and grant him eternal peace. One of his grandsons graduated from *Jamia Ahmadiyya* Canada and is now a missionary. During my visit to Canada he introduced him to me and appeared to be very pleased with the fact that his grandson has become a Missionary.

This is life. People from different parts of the world, from different background come together and then the bonding becomes lifelong. Such was the case with Mehmud Ahmad Sahib whom I met only a few times but the acquaintance continued for 50 years and the memories will continue for the rest of the life. Good people are not easy to forget. Their memory twinkles like the fireflies in the dark night, reminding you of the small bits and pieces of your life which were enriched by their company.

****

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****

.HADITH

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "My followers will pass through conditions similar to the Bani Israil. The similarity will be as a shoe compares with (its pairing) shoe, so much so that if someone in Bani Israil has committed openly an immoral act with his mother, there will be someone in my followers who will do the same thing. Bani Israil were divided into seventy-two sects, my followers will be divided into seventy-three sects. All of them will enter Hell except one sect. They said, 'Which is this sect. O Messenger[saw] of Allah?' He[sa] said, '(Who follow) what I am on and my Companions.' "

(Tirmidhi kitabul Iman)

Hadhrat Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "Surely, You will ape the ways of the earlier people, span by span and cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they entered the burrow of an iguana, you would follow them. We said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! Are you referring to Jews and Christians?' He[sa] said, 'Who else?' "

(Bukhari kitabul i'tiisam)

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[saw] of Allah say: "Allah will not take away knowledge suddenly. He will take it away from the people by taking away the real scholars. So, when there will remain no religious scholars, people will take ignorant persons as their leaders; when such ones will be consulted, they will render their opinions without having the knowledge. They themselves will stray away or they will lead others astray."

(Bukhari kitabul 'ilm)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani

October 20, 2014

Membership Jamat Ahmadiya USA

السلام علیکم ورحمت اللہ وبرکاتہ

Karimullah Zirvi Sahib has been the Editor of Ahmadiya Gazette and Al-Noor, both our National Jamat organs. He has been doing this for some decades. I do not remember who was the last editor before his stewardship. It is time for a change. He will still publish the October and the November issue.
After this the stewardship would go to our National Secretary Publications, Syed Sajid Ahmad.

There is a deep admiration we all feel for Zirvi Sahib. He is constantly kind to all. He is Blessed by Allah with a wonderful family. He has a knowledge of Islam. He has been writing material other than the composition / compiling of the gazette.
I for one hope he will keep active and involved with the Jamat in other ways. We will need that.

Kindly remember him in your prayers as you welcome the new team.
Insha'Allah

والسلام وخاکسار

Ahsanullah Zafar

15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905
phone: 301-879-0110 fax: 301-879-0115 www.ahmadiyya.us 1-800-Why-Islam

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GREETINGS:

It is my pleasure to join with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to welcome everyone gathered for the 66th annual Ahmaddiya Muslim Conference being held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex.

Pennsylvania thrives on its vibrant cultural heritage. As you gather to strengthen the bonds of your community, all those in attendance are embracing a rich heritage filled with tradition and pride. I hope this will be an enjoyable event as everyone celebrates their faith and increases public awareness about the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. During your stay in Harrisburg, I hope you will have the opportunity to experience some of the many attractions and natural beauty of central Pennsylvania.

As Governor, and on behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I am pleased to welcome all those gathered for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Conference. Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable celebration.

Tom Corbett

TOM CORBETT
Governor

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR

ANTHONY G. BROWN
LT. GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-2804
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

A MESSAGE FROM LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY G. BROWN

August 16, 2014

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 66th Annual Jalsa Salana Peace Conference.

Since its founding, this Conference has become an instrumental force for positive change throughout the world. Because of your great work, thousands are able to gather in one place to receive spiritual enlightenment and learn how to better our communities by restoring our values with unity and peace.

I believe strong communities are built, not born, and each and every day your members are making a real difference in the lives of our neighbors. With the support and dedication of spiritual leaders like you, we are building a brighter tomorrow for our children and families. I look forward to continuing to work together.

In closing, on behalf of all Marylanders, I thank you and send my best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

Anthony G. Brown

KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
NEW YORK

UNITED STATES SENATOR

August 16, 2014

Dear Delegates of the 66th National Annual Convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA,

It is a privilege to send greetings to everyone attending the 2014 Ahmadiyya Peace Convention.

The drive for peace is a noble and worthy cause and one that can only be achieved through the cooperation of people from all backgrounds. I commend the dedication of this community to bringing together such a diverse group of individuals to share ideas. I am grateful for those represented today who are taking steps to ensure a peaceful future for generations to come. It is my hope that your efforts inspire others to take part in actions large and small, public and private, to enhance the well-being of those in our community.

Please accept my best wishes for this wonderful event and for many years of continued success.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

NOT PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

August 16, 2014

USA Jalsa Salana
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear USA Jalsa Salana Attendees,

It is my pleasure to extend greetings to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community as you gather to celebrate your 66th Jalsa Salana USA in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where you are focused on *World Crisis and a Pathway to Peace*.

We are fortunate to live in this great country where free expression of religion is constitutionally protected for every citizen. I commend you for your focus on establishing peace, not only in your communities, but worldwide.

Best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

Ron Johnson

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Congressional Recognition

Presented to

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

In Honor of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's 66th Jalsa Salana

August 22, 2014

It is my distinct honor to recognize the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for its 66th Jalsa Salana, which was held from August 15 to August 17, 2014 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Jalsa Salana is recognized as the oldest annual Muslim American Convention in the United States. The Jalsa Salana convention serves as a platform to strengthen and unite the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has grown throughout the globe, promoting the tenants of loyalty and love for one's nation, just relations between nations, and global unity. These honorable priorities are best encapsulated by the slogan, "*Love for All, Hatred for None.*"

The theme of this year's convention, "*World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace,*" is both critical and timely in light of recent international conflicts. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues an important tradition by hosting the 66th Jalsa Salana that promises to enhance spiritual, religious, and intellectual discussions and awareness.

Jalsa Salana is a significant event for the Ahmadi people. "Love for All, Hatred for None" is a principle every nation would benefit to adopt. Please accept my most sincere congratulations to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on this momentous occasion.

Sincerely,

Joyce Beatty

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress, Ohio-03

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III
4TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE

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Washington, DC 20515-2104

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8 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 200
ATTLEBORO, MA 02703
(508) 431-1110

August 16, 2014

Dear Distinguished Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,

I write to you with best wishes for a successful celebration of the 66th Jalsa Salana USA and send special greetings to the women, men, children, and families in attendance from the Massachusetts Fourth Congressional District, which I honorably represent in the United States Congress.

Your work fostering day-to-day tolerance and peace in the world makes a difference for so many families and individuals living in Greater Boston. You have my sincere gratitude for the passion and integrity that you bring to your vision and values for a better, more compassionate world.

Again, congratulations to you on the occasion of the 66th Jalsa Salana USA. I very much look forward to our continued partnership and friendship in the days and years that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Joe Kennedy
Member of Congress

WASHINGTON

1414 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515–2107
(202) 225–5111
Fax: (202) 225–9322

Committee on Financial Services
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Housing
& Insurance

Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure

Committee on Ethics

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Michael E. Capuano
7th District, Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS

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Fax (617) 621–8628

Roxbury Community College
Campus Library
Room 211

Stetson Hall
Room 124
Randolph

August 16, 2014

For the 66th Jalsa Salana of the Ahmaddiyah Muslim Community of the United States

My friends,

I regret that I cannot be present with you in person this weekend. I stand with you in our shared commitment to human rights and religious liberty. Today we honor the memory of our fellow citizen Dr. Mehdi Ali Qamar, murdered after he volunteered to provide health care in the Punjab. With you, I mourn all the tragic losses your community has suffered, and at this time we should also mourn those of other religious traditions slain by zealots.

We must unite in our determination to create a world in which men and women are not killed or enslaved because of their religious beliefs. Article Eighteen of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirms***: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.***

These principles have been formally adopted and yet remain ignored in practice. Tragically, men, women, and children are still persecuted for their beliefs, denied full citizenship, tortured and killed, sometimes by mobs, sometimes in executions lawful in the jurisdictions where they occur. I will stand with you and with others who demand religious liberty and civic equality until those ideals are realized.

Michael E. Capuano

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
9th District
Illinois

Member of Congress
Washington, D.C.
202-225-2111

August 13, 2014

Dear Friends:

I would like to congratulate the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA during your 66th annual Jalsa Salana peace conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania this weekend. Unfortunately, due to schedule constraints, I will not be able to attend this conference.

In a world where there is still too much hatred and violence, your ongoing efforts to build peace within our communities is so important. I appreciate and commend your work towards building peace.

I look forward to hearing about this conference from the members of your community who are my constituents in the 9th Congressional District of Illinois.

Best wishes on a successful peace conference!

Sincerely

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

TED POE
TEXAS
2ND DISTRICT

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee - Chairman
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus - Chairman
Immigration Reform Caucus - Chairman
P.O.R.T.S. Caucus - Co-Chairman

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4302

August 12, 2014

To the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community:

Thank you for your gracious invitation to attend the Convention. Although I can't be here with you today, I commend you on gathering together. There is no freedom more basic and essential than the freedom to practice what we believe. Unfortunately, as we look around the world, it seems to be under attack more and more. Despite your commitment to peace, Ahmadis have been the victims of violence and discrimination. One of the attacks that stands out most in my mind is when several Islamist militants used guns, grenades, and suicide bombs to attack your mosques in Lahore, Pakistan back on May 28, 2010. Ninety-four Ahmadi were killed and over 100 were injured. I do not believe the Pakistan government has done enough to protect Ahmadis. In fact, I think the government actively promotes persecution. The United States should be clear to such a government that there will be consequences for a government that does not respect the basic human rights of its citizens. I think one of the consequences should be cutting off our aid to Pakistan.

We must remain vigilant. There are evildoers out there who will kill us because of what we believe. The world needs to hear of these atrocities and stand up to the persecutors. I hope that, despite religious persecution, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to promote peace all around the globe. Together, let us preserve religious freedom as a God-given right to all mankind.

God and Texas,

TED POE
Member of Congress
TEXAS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

SENIOR WHIP
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

August 15, 2014

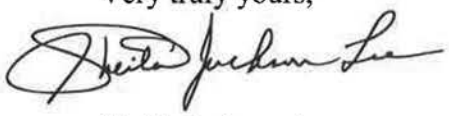
Dear Friends:

On behalf of the constituents of the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA for hosting its 66th Jalsa Salana Annual Convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I applaud the Ahmadiyya Community for continuing this great tradition of bringing together community leaders, scholars, and activist to address the various would crises and working towards a peaceful way forward. The Ahmadiyya Communities work in the State of Texas and across the nation is much appreciated.

As a firm believer in civil right, I salute the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for empowering American Muslims for decades. By using the teaching of the Holy Quran and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to reinstitute morality, justice and peace, your work truly is essential in making religious understanding and democracy work for everyone in this country.

Once again, best of luck and congratulations to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA for holding the 66th Jalsa Salana Annual Convention and empowering the Muslim American community. This year's convention will be a wonderful experience for everyone person in attendance.

Very truly yours,



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

TOM REED
23RD DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Washington, DC 20515

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www.reed.house.gov

August 16, 2014

Dear Friends of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA:

Congratulations on your 66th Jalsa Salana Annual Convention!

I join with the many people world-wide who admire your work to take a stand against the persecution of peaceful Muslims and Christians in Pakistan and around the globe.

The values you uphold are commendable and I encourage you to continue pursuing your goals of facilitating greater spiritual awareness, strengthening ties, and promoting peace in the community.

Those of different religions can peacefully co-exist and work together toward the mutual goal of a world free from fear and violence based on one's beliefs or ethnicity.

Best wishes for a successful 2014 conference!

Warm Regards,

Tom Reed
Member of Congress
NY-23

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP

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RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS
CHAIR, 107TH CONGRESS

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Congress of the United States
30th District, Texas

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August 6, 2014

Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar
National President
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA
2141 Leroy Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear President Zafar:

I am writing to wish you and the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United States who are attending your annual convention a wonderful experience as you gather, and work towards creating a peaceful world.

It is of particular significance that many of your members have brought their children to the convention so that they might learn that a peaceful resolution of conflict is the only way that the human race will survive and prosper.

The greatness of this country is that we are a mosaic of people from many different parts of the world who collectively yearn for peace and harmony, while existing as brothers and sisters in a land of liberty.

Sincerely,

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress